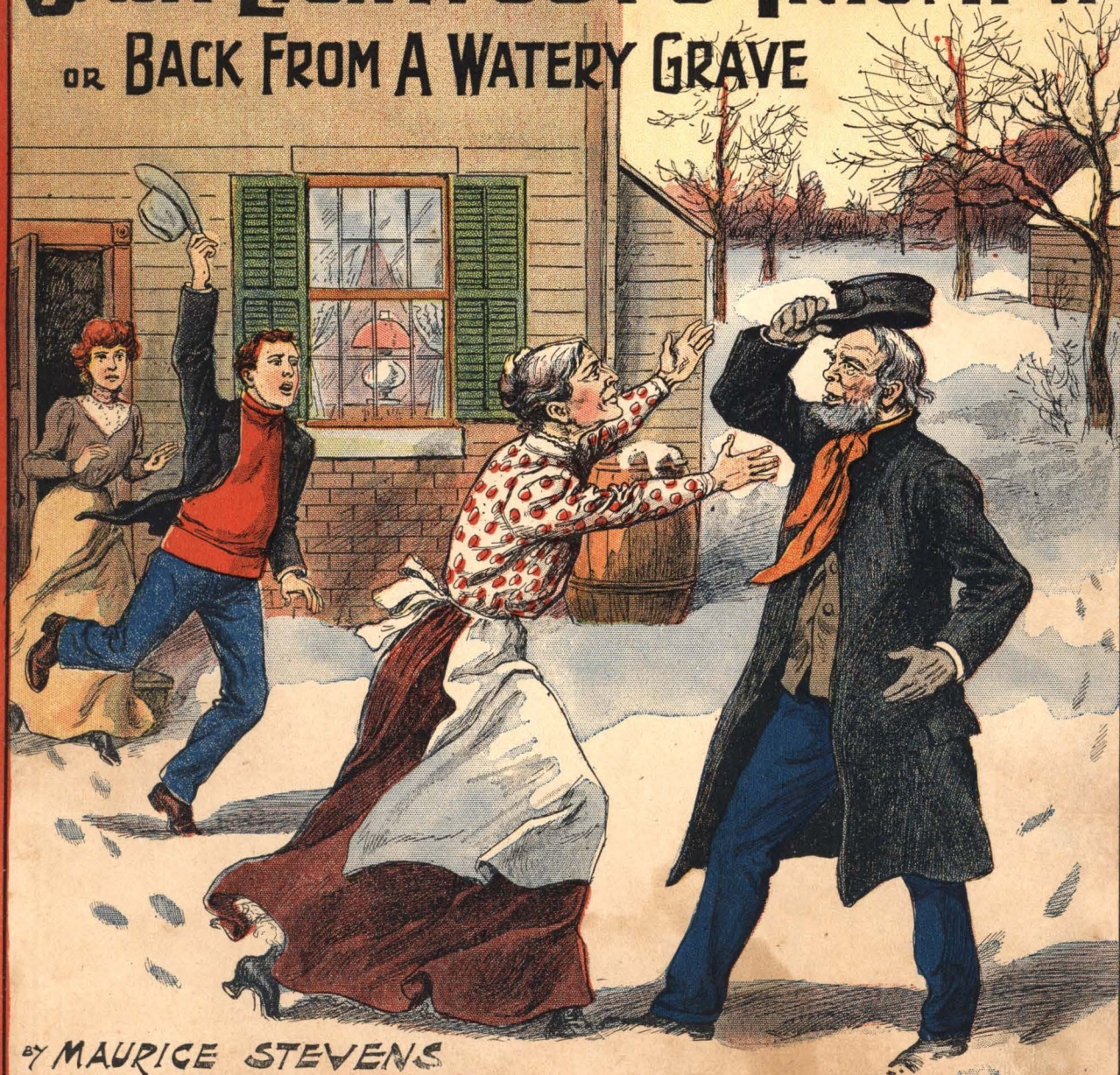


No. 46

5 CENTS

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S TRIUMPH OR BACK FROM A WATERY GRAVE



by MAURICE STEVENS

As Mrs. Lightfoot screamed and fell forward, Jack bounded out of the house, shouting at the top of his voice the joyful words: "Father! oh, it's father!"

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

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JACK LIGHTFOOT'S TRIUMPH;

OR,

BACK FROM A WATERY GRAVE.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, one of those who followed the newcomer, Birkett, being dazzled by the dash of his manner and the free way in which he flung money around.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a stanch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Jubal Marlin, a boy friend of our hero.

Prof. Sanderson, head of the academy, who for some reason hated the Lightfoot family.

Justice Prendergast, of local fame.

Ross, Donovan, two rascals who knew a good thing when they saw it in Sanderson.

John Lightfoot, the man who was castaway upon an island in the Pacific.

Mrs. Lightfoot, Jack's mother.

Katie Strawn, who once more proved herself a heroine in the service of Jack Lightfoot.

Nellie Conner, who possessed the prettiest blue eyes in Cranford, according to Jack.

Kennedy, the town constable.

CHAPTER I.

PROF. SANDERSON'S ULTIMATUM.

As Jack Lightfoot started up-town after school hours in the afternoon he beheld his old enemy, Prof. Sanderson, of the academy, walking in the direction of the neat little cottage which was Jack's home. However, Jack did not think that Sanderson meant to call there, for he and Sanderson were, and had long been, at sword's points.

Why Prof. Sanderson disliked him so Jack did not know. He only understood that Sanderson's dislike was rooted in some trouble of the past between the professor and Jack's father.

Jack did not tarry to watch Sanderson, but went on up-town.

As for the professor, he advanced to the paling gate in front of the Lightfoot cottage, let himself into the yard, and walking round to the side door knocked softly for admittance.

Mrs. Lightfoot, who was alone in the house, came to the door and flushed when she saw who was there.

"I should like to see you a few moments, madam," said Sanderson, surveying her coldly with his fishy eyes.

"My son and daughter are away," she answered hesitating; "do you wish to see me about Jack?"

"I wish to see you alone," he answered. And then added: "Yes, it's about Jack."

She admitted him into the little sitting-room, taking his tall hat and hanging it in the hall and offering to take his overcoat, which, however, he preferred to keep on.

"The business of my call will detain me but a few minutes," he said.

He doubled himself into the chair she offered and sat looking hard at her, with his ebony cane across his knees. There was something in his eyes and face she did not like. It was at times a cold and cruel face, high and narrow, with a white forehead. At other times his aspect was quite benignant, and the flowing side-whiskers he wore gave him also, at such times, an assumed air of great kindness and benevolence.

Mrs. Lightfoot took a chair at the other side of the small room and waited somewhat nervously to learn the nature of this most unexpected visit.

Then from an inside pocket of the capacious overcoat Prof. Sanderson brought out a big envelope and drew forth two ominous-looking documents.

"You know about these, of course," he said, as he produced them. "They are mortgages on this house and lot. Your husband agreed to pay them before his mysterious disappearance some years ago, but they have not been paid. I have not troubled you about them because I understood you were in no condition to pay them off. You know, too, that I've not asked of you even so much as the interest. But since your son has seen fit to array himself against me and——"

Mrs. Lightfoot was staring as if blinded.

"I—I don't think I quite understand you?" she gasped. "Did you say mortgages? My husband gave no mortgages on this property."

He smiled, as much as to assure her that she was mistaken.

"But I never signed any mortgages, and he could not have mortgaged the place without my signature!" she declared.

"I see you don't understand," he blandly began to explain. "These mortgages were already against the house when your husband purchased it. They were executed by the original owner, of whom your husband bought it; and they hold until they are paid."

She stared at him as if dazed.

"The first is for two thousand dollars, with interest; and the second for seven hundred, with interest."

"The house isn't worth that much!"

"If it isn't, then the loss is mine. May I ask if you are prepared to pay these?"

"Let me see them, please," she asked, controlling her agitation.

He passed them over and she examined them.

"You see they have not been paid."

She saw that only too clearly.

"Now I want my money. Your son has seen fit to be most unpleasant to me at times, and—well, patience has ceased to be a virtue with me. I demand the payment of the money or I shall sell the house over your head."

His mild manner had vanished.

"I never heard of these mortgages!" she urged.

"Simply because I haven't troubled you about them. The man who executed them is dead. The first was put on record by him before your husband went away; the second I have just had recorded. Any lawyer will tell you that they hold the property, and now I demand payment. I don't intend to be lenient any longer."

"But I can't pay you. Where could I raise that much money?"

Her voice trembled. The shock had been great. She was trying to put away the thought of what this meant, but could not. It meant the loss of this pleasant home; and it meant that the family would be plunged into want and that Jack would have to leave school.

"I don't see how it is possible for me to pay them," she urged.

It was just what Sanderson wanted apparently.

"Then you can leave the house, madam! If Jack's

attitude toward me had been different my course would be of another nature."

"What has Jack done to offend you? I think he has never done anything."

Sanderson's white face flushed to an angry red.

"He has done all he could to lessen my influence and injure my academy. I know of instances where he has urged boys to go into the high school instead of my private school, and he has spoken disrespectfully of me innumerable times. As I said, patience has ceased to be a virtue with me; and now I demand this money. If it is not paid I shall foreclose these mortgages and have you and your family turned into the street, unless you have some friend or relative who is willing to put up the money for you."

There was a strange glitter of his eyes which she did not fail to note—the glitter that one sees at times in the eyes of a wild animal. For the moment the mask was off, and the man stood revealed before her in his true light.

"But I can't pay them!" she urged again.

He rose from his chair, pulling his collar up round his neck, and taking his ebony cane in his right hand he moved toward the door.

"Madam," he said coldly, "you see now that while your son has been doing all he could to injure me, I have, as it were, stood between him and absolute poverty. You see that at any time I could have demanded this money. I did not and should not have done so for a long time, perhaps, if he had conducted himself differently. He has aspired to become a leader of the young fellows of this town; and because he chanced to be attending the high school instead of my academy——"

"He tried to gain admittance to your school you'll remember, and couldn't," she reminded.

"Because his marks were too low—he was too much of an ignoramus; and yet this young ignoramus thinks to become the leader of all the young fellows of the town, and in doing so opposes me and my school, and he has been bitter against me ever since he failed in that entrance examination."

"I don't think he ever opposed your school."

He stabbed the floor angrily with his cane.

"Don't I know, madam; don't I know? I know a great deal more than you think I do. As I said, because I held these mortgages and could have turned him on the street any day, yet did not, I have by so much as that supported him, making it possible for him to continue in the high school instead of going out to dig ditches as he deserves to have to do. But I am lenient no longer."

He stepped out into the hall and took down his hat.

"Madam," he said, turning round to her, "you have my ultimatum. Get that money for me or out of this house you and your hopeful son will go, and your daughter, too, bag and baggage! I shall hold back no longer. Good day!"

Then he opened the door and stepped outside, and she heard him walk stiffly along toward the front gate.

She dropped back into her chair, white-faced, looking frightened. What new calamity was this which had come on her? She glanced round the room. This lovely little home! Was she to lose it? Would Jack have to quit school and become, as Sanderson had predicted, a digger of ditches in the streets of Cranford? And were there to be no more music lessons for her daughter, Daisy?

How she had struggled and managed to keep up an appearance of respectability; to keep Jack in school and Daisy at her music! She knew that Jack would go to work willingly at anything he could find to do when the pinch came. But she did not want him to do that. She wanted him to have an education.

She clasped her hands and stared at the wall in a stony way; and then, realizing what this thing meant, tears came into her eyes.

CHAPTER II.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S PERIL.

When Jack came home, accompanied by his sister Daisy, whom he had met up-town, he was astonished to find his mother crying as if her heart would break.

He was almost too astounded to speak when she told him of the unknown mortgages and Sanderson's threats.

Daisy began to cry with her mother.

"I'll go and see him," said Jack. "It doesn't seem possible that it can be true."

"I saw the mortgages myself," was his mother's hopeless answer. "Of course we can't pay any such sum as that and we shall have to give up the house."

She looked at him, her eyes red with weeping.

"And that means you will have to quit school!"

"I can quit school all right, if I have to, and go to work. Many another boy has had to do the same. We'll get along all right, mother, in spite of this and in spite of anything Sanderson can do."

However, when Jack left the house and set out to see Sanderson he did not feel quite so hopeful and cheerful as his words indicated. He could quit school, and was willing to do so; and he was willing to do even the hardest kind of labor, if he could get nothing better, that his mother and sister might be kept in comfortable circumstances; yet the distress which had overwhelmed them, and which they felt so keenly, troubled him sorely. No, it was not of himself that Jack thought now, but of his mother and sister. He would have laid down his life for them.

He found Sanderson at home and was at once admitted to the house.

The professor occupied bachelor apartments not far from the academy, and though respected by many, he had few intimates, but lived a solitary life. His servants knew him to be cold, calculating and selfish.

The professor stood erect in his room, as if on dress parade, as Jack entered it. And he waved Jack to a chair with a sort of silent contempt.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"I came to see about those mortgages."

The professor sneered.

"I presume you haven't brought the money to pay them? They call for twenty-seven hundred dollars, with interest."

"I can't pay them," said Jack; "but I should like to see them."

"I have shown them to your mother and she is the only one I'm dealing with in this matter. You're not even of age yet."

"That's true, but I should like to see them."

"Bring me the money they call for and you can see

them, but not otherwise. I suppose you would undertake to pay them?"

Sanderson sneered again.

Jack's face flushed.

"If it's an honest debt against my father I should pay it, if the payment took me years; but first I must be satisfied that it is an honest debt."

Sanderson's high, white forehead flushed to a deep pink and his little eyes glinted. He picked up his ebony cane as if he meant to strike Jack over the head with it.

"Do you mean to insult me, you puppy?"

"No," Jack answered, though he was stirred by indignation.

The door-bell sounded and Prof. Sanderson, smoothing out the frown on his face, went to see who had called.

Jack sat looking about the room and he glanced at the drawers of a desk, wondering if the mortgages which Sanderson had refused to let him see were in that desk.

He started with surprise, for one of the drawers had not been well closed and a piece of writing protruding from it showed the name of Jack's father, John Lightfoot.

The suspicion Jack had entertained that all was not right in this matter increased when he saw that written name. He had long believed that Prof. Sanderson was a scoundrel masquerading in the guise of a gentleman and scholar.

Jack left his chair and stepped to the desk. The name stared at him plainly now from the end of a legal document just within reach of his hand.

Under ordinary circumstances Jack would no more have thought of trying to discover the character of that paper than he would have thought of picking a man's pockets. Now the suspicion that all was not right made him pull the paper from the drawer. He felt that in view of the unexpected turning up of those mortgages he had a right to know what this paper was which bore his father's name.

On opening it he was astounded to find that it was a release of the larger mortgage signed by the man to whom the mortgage had been given.

As Jack stood staring at the mortgage release Prof. Sanderson reentered the room, and a roar came from his lips when he saw what Jack held.

He snatched the paper from Jack and pushed him away from the desk, at the same time again lifting the ebony cane as if he intended to beat Jack over the head with it.

Jack faced him, his eyes flashing.

"Prof. Sanderson," he said, trying to speak calmly, "that first and largest mortgage was paid by my father before he left the country for Alaska. That paper shows it. It is a release of the mortgage. How it came into your hands I don't know, but it was never recorded."

"You don't know what you're talking about," said Sanderson, his white face pink again. "This is not a release of that mortgage, but is merely a memorandum I made concerning it. And what right had you to open my desk and take out any paper whatsoever? You're as big a thief as your father was before you!"

Jack's face flamed and for an instant it seemed that he meant to launch himself at Sanderson's throat. He controlled himself with difficulty, and when he spoke his voice sounded hoarse.

"Don't insult the name of my father!" he cried. "He was not a thief, and I am not. But I saw his name on that paper as its edge stuck out of that drawer; and I felt that I had a right to know what was on it. I know now."

"What do you know?" Sanderson sneered. "You imagine something, but you know absolutely nothing."

"I know that my father paid off the first mortgage and that the paper you have there is a release. And"—Jack's voice rose—"it will never be paid again!"

Sanderson lifted his cane.

"Do you mean to call me a liar, you whelp?" he shouted.

He had lost self-control. The fact that Jack had penetrated at once beneath his villainy had aroused all the malignity of his nature. He had long kept it bottled up, and its explosion was now like the outburst of a volcano.

He dashed at Jack, striking furiously with the cane.

Jack retreated toward the wall, throwing up his arms and ducking to avoid the blows aimed at his head.

Sanderson struck again and again. The cane was a stout affair in spite of its slender appearance. One of the blows broke through Jack's guard and rapped him heavily on top of the head. Once more he threw up his hand. This time he caught the cane and sought to disarm the enraged professor.

Then he was given another surprise; for, as he tried to drag the cane out of Sanderson's grasp, it parted. The end that Sanderson retained was the handle to which a slender swordlike blade was attached; the end Jack held was the sheath of this blade. The cane was a sword-cane—the weapon of the stealthy coward and the sneaking murderer.

The unexpected revelation of the true character of the ebony cane increased Prof. Sanderson's violent and ungovernable rage. His eyes burned suddenly with a hot, wild light, like those of a madman, and a frothy foam flecked his thin lips.

He stood for a moment staring at Jack, as if the revelation dumfounded him—it had dumfounded Jack—and then with a low cry, like the snarl of a wild beast, he lunged at Jack, driving the deadly blade straight at the breast of the unarmed youth. It was a murderous, cowardly thrust.

Jack barely escaped, by a quick leap sideways, the blade of the sword-cane passing between his body and his left arm.

Sanderson drove at him again, and he fled into the corner of the room. He was astounded and bewildered by the sudden murderous demeanor of Prof. Sanderson. An attack of this sort was something he had not anticipated in the wildest flights of his fancy.

He saw that hot glow in the professor's eyes deepen until it seemed a glare of insanity, as Sanderson lunged at him again.

"I'll settle you—you whelp, you puppy!" Sanderson roared, as he made that lunge. "And at the same time I'll settle that old score with your father."

Jack dodged again, evading the thrust, and the point of the blade stuck in the wall at his side, shattering the plaster, which rained on the floor in a white, sandy shower as the professor plucked out the cane.

The momentary halt, brought when Sanderson plucked the point of the cane out of the wall, gave Jack a chance to get out of that deadly corner.

He ran toward the door; but with a leap Sanderson interposed. The door was nearer to him than to Jack.

"You don't get out, you young dog!" Sanderson shouted, for he had lost all caution and elevated his voice. "I'll settle my score with you and your father right here and now."

Seeing he could not reach the door Jack lifted the chair he had been sitting in not long before and raised it aloft.

"Strike at me again with that and I'll brain you!" he threatened fiercely.

Sanderson was deaf and blind to caution; he was a madman now, seeing only his foe before him and resolved to strike that foe to the earth. He rushed at Jack once more, wild and furious.

Jack side-stepped, and at the same time struck with the chair, feeling that he was compelled to do so in self-defense.

Sanderson dodged, thrusting with the cane; but, though the chair missed his head, one of its rungs struck him so heavily on the shoulder that he was swept against the wall and came near falling.

Jack jumped to the door.

The next moment he passed through and fled wildly along the hall to the outer entrance.

He fumbled at the door there with trembling fingers, and only succeeded in opening it as he heard Sanderson gain the hall and come lunging in pursuit.

Jack fairly threw himself out of the house and raced like a scared rabbit for the front gate.

When he reached the street no one was in sight. He started to run; then, taking a second thought, stopped still there, and looked back at the peaceful-looking home of the academy professor. He expected to see Sanderson appear in the doorway.

But Sanderson did not appear. The house was as quiet as a church on a week day.

"Gee!" Jack gasped. "That man is either a maniac or the greatest villain alive! He would have killed me sure if he could have reached me."

Jack had not a doubt of that, as he turned again and

walked hurriedly down the street. Yet that Prof. Sanderson, the respectable head of Cranford Academy, could do such a thing, or had attempted it, seemed almost laughably preposterous.

CHAPTER III.

A CONSULTATION.

The sun had set and night was rapidly approaching when Jack Lightfoot left the bachelor home of Prof. Sanderson and wended his way down the street toward the heart of the town.

Jack felt startled and almost unnerved. He had always fancied that Sanderson was a good deal of a hypocrite, but had never believed, and would not have believed, that he was so great a scoundrel. The singularity of the whole thing, together with the strange light which had flamed in Sanderson's eyes, made Jack wonder if the man was not really crazy.

Yet no one had ever hinted that Sanderson was not perfectly sane. He was credited with being a man of prodigious learning. He had not many friends, but, except in certain quarters where he was heartily disliked, he seemed to be highly respected.

Jack's face was flushed, his heart was jumping and his whole body felt as hot as if he had a fever.

Yet the reader knows that Jack Lightfoot was not a coward. He was astonished, bewildered, amazed beyond the power of words to express by what had occurred.

He was fully convinced now that in concealing the release of the first mortgage Sanderson had done so not merely for the purpose of collecting the money a second time, but that he might strike a blow at the family of John Lightfoot, whom he apparently hated as few men hate even their bitterest enemy. He had bided his time, and now he intended to turn Jack and his mother and sister into the streets of Cranford, if the thing could be done.

Jack had seen that mortgage release, yet no one else had, and he had not retained possession of it. Sanderson still had it. Jack, by snatching at the sword-cane and trying to tear it out of Sanderson's hands, had revealed the deadly character of the ebony walking-stick

which the bland professor carried with him always. But Sanderson still had the cane.

Thus thinking, Jack began to see that when he began to make accusations against the wily professor it would simply be his word against Sanderson's. Sanderson would refuse to admit that there was any release of that mortgage and would deny strenuously that he had attacked Jack.

But the ebony sword-cane!

"Unless he destroys that or pretends to have lost it, the cane itself will convict him of treachery and a murderous spirit; he won't want any one to know that he carries such a weapon. That alone would cast suspicion on him and his story."

Night was at hand when Jack reached home.

His mother was still so distressed that she could not speak without a quiver of pain in her voice, and Daisy was unable to cheer her.

All the way home Jack had debated with himself whether he ought to tell his mother of what had happened at Sanderson's. He still hesitated; but, after a little while, when she questioned him, he told her and Daisy, thinking that the straightforward way was the best.

They heard him in astonishment.

"He has the mortgage release and he tried to kill you?" was his mother's startled cry.

Jack reiterated his statement

"It doesn't seem possible!" said Daisy, in amazement.

"That's going to be the trouble," said Jack. "Every one will say that the thing seems impossible; yet it's true, every word of it. The man is a villain, and I'm half of the opinion that he is, also, crazy. He came at me like a madman, and if I hadn't been lively on my feet and got out of the house as soon as I could he would have killed me. I haven't a doubt of it."

"Oh, I believe you," said Daisy; "yet it's so unlike anything we ever heard of Prof. Sanderson that it seems impossible."

"Some people will say it's a preposterous yarn," Jack admitted. "But he has that mortgage release. It has never been placed on record—the release itself showed that—and therefore it is no release, so long as

he holds possession of it and denies its existence. I can swear that I saw it, but he can swear that I didn't and that it has no existence. So, there you are."

"You must keep out of his way!" said his mother, alarmed above everything else for Jack's safety.

What was the possession of that home even compared with the safety of the son she loved? She had ceased crying, and her cheeks were white.

"What can we do?" she asked helplessly.

As if in answer to this cry for help, footsteps were heard outside and a knock at the door. The visitors were Tom Lightfoot and Lafe Lampton.

"Shall we tell them?" Jack asked, before they were given admittance.

"I—I don't know!" was his mother's answer.

Usually she was able to think very clearly for herself. But now the strangeness of this affair, together with fear for Jack's safety, made her unable to decide even a point so simple as this.

"Better tell them," Daisy urged.

"Yes, I think so," Jack added, when his mother seemed unable to decide.

Then, when Tom and Lafe came in and were seated they were taken into the confidence of the family, and Jack recounted his singular adventures at Prof. Sanderson's, to the utter astonishment of these callers.

Lafe Lampton took out an apple and bit into it as if he thought that would help him.

"Ginger," he cried, "this lays over anything I ever heard of! What will Phil Kirtland say to this?"

"He'll say it's a lie probably," Jack answered.

"Yes, I don't know but he will!" Lafe acknowledged. "And of course Sanderson will say it's a lie."

"I'm afraid no one will believe it," said Jack. "I shouldn't hardly believe it myself if I didn't know it to be true. So, you see what I'm up against. But we're never going to pay that first mortgage and I think there's something crooked about the second one. Father would have never gone away leaving a thing like that hanging over us without telling us about it."

Jack knew that his father had been financially involved. He had a restless, speculative spirit, and while trying to make quick money in real estate and stocks he had gone beyond his financial ability. The result had

been a crash, which had left him in strained circumstances.

This was the principal reason that had taken him to the Klondike gold-fields at the time of the gold excitement there. He hoped to recoup his broken fortunes in that land.

But before he had gone he had, as his family believed, left their little home free of incumbrance.

Jack still believed that it was so and that there was something radically crooked about these mortgages which Prof. Sanderson had just produced.

Jack said as much as this in his talk with Lafe and Tom, and his mother and Daisy agreed with his views.

"I know now that the first mortgage is paid and it will never be paid again. And that second one I think is a fake of some kind. I'm going to find out about it?"

"How?" asked practical Tom Lightfoot.

"I don't know," Jack was forced to acknowledge.

Lafe Lampton's usually good-natured face was a study in soberness.

"This rather up-ends me!" he admitted. "I can't think of anything but that attack he made on you with the cane—a sword-cane! Jimminy crickets, think of it! The professor carrying a sword-cane."

"It's against the law for a man to carry such a weapon," said Tom; "as much against the law as to carry a revolver. It's a concealed weapon."

"Concealed mighty slick, too!" cried Lafe, again nibbling at his apple. "Say, don't the thought of it just jar you all up? It does me."

"I'll have a talk with father," said Tom.

Tom, who was an academy student, was more bewildered even than Lafe. He could not doubt the word of Jack Lightfoot, his cousin, but the thing seemed so difficult of belief.

CHAPTER IV.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S DEFEAT.

While Jack Lightfoot was thus talking with Lafe and Tom and with Daisy and his mother, Prof. Sanderson was at home, walking nervously the length of his room.

His face was set and white and his eyes had an unnatural glare.

"What a fool! what a fool!" he kept repeating. "Why did I let my temper get away with me?"

He stopped before the window and looked out into the darkness.

"But I can deny the whole thing. My word is as good as his and will go as far. I will claim that he attacked me when I refused to surrender the mortgages and that I was compelled to defend myself. Ah! if I had killed him!"

His eyes blazed like those of a madman.

He began to wonder what he would have done afterward if he had killed Jack Lightfoot.

Leaving the room he went down into the cellar and opened the door of the furnace. It was white hot, for he had put on no coal for some time.

"Ah!" he snarled, "I could have disposed of him in there and no one could have been the wiser! God, why didn't I do it?"

Damp sweat came out on his forehead, which he wiped away with a slim white hand, while the glow of the white coals on his white face made it look like a dead face, in spite of the gleaming eyes.

"I will do it yet if he crosses my path! I have sworn to be revenged against John Lightfoot. He is dead, somewhere in the South Pacific, they say; and even if living he will never get home again. Now, I strike at the family! It will pay me for those years of suffering."

The professor seemed to be raving and saying nonsense; but he was not. He had a big debt of hate laid up against John Lightfoot.

Years before, John Lightfoot, Jack's father, in certain business dealings with Sanderson, who was not then a professor or an educator and bore another name, had discovered Sanderson engaged in a gigantic fraud.

Among others swindled then by Sanderson had been Lightfoot himself. Being able to produce proofs of Sanderson's guilt, John Lightfoot had caused his arrest and Sanderson was sent to the penitentiary for six years, the result of Lightfoot's testimony concerning the fraud.

Sanderson served the six years in prison, and came out with a mind so distorted by hate and a desire for revenge that he was a monomaniac.

In every other respect he was normal. On that one subject he was crazy. He swore a great oath to kill Lightfoot if their paths ever crossed; and when he came at length to Cranford, as a teacher in the academy, of which he later became the head, he determined that he would in time ruin and disgrace John Lightfoot's family, despite the fact that the other magnanimously kept silent with regard to his former life.

His methods up to the present had been craft and dissimulation. In many ways he had sought to injure Jack, though all the while pretending to great fairness. The reader will remember some of his actions.

And now had come this outbreak. He had not intended that it should come. He had still meant to keep himself within the law in his persecutions of the family. But in an unguarded moment he had let the mask of hypocrisy fall from his face and had shown the whole of his evil and murderous nature.

Sanderson knew that if the people of Cranford could be made to believe Jack Lightfoot's story he would not only not be permitted to remain at the head of the academy, but that in all likelihood, if he was not sent to prison, he would be escorted by a mob of indignant people to the limits of the town and threatened with death if he did not leave at once.

He glared at the hot fire in the furnace, in imagination seeing Jack Lightfoot's body crisping there.

Again he wiped the perspiration from his streaming white forehead.

"I was a fool," he said bitterly. "I lost my reason. But"—he snarled the words—"if he goes too far I may have use for this place yet!"

He closed the furnace door and returned to his room, that look of the madman still in his eyes. He did not know it was there—did not know that the seal of temporary insanity was set in every feature of his face. For the time his mania possessed him completely.

This was shown by the fact that when he again began to pace the room he could think of nothing for a while but of some manner by which Jack Lightfoot could be killed without danger of discovery.

The foreclosure of those mortgages and the throwing of the family into the street did not seem now sat-

isfaction of sufficient severity. Before this night he had thought it would be a great revenge; but now it was not enough. Jack had defied him, might expose him; Jack, he believed, resembled his father in looks; and it would be like hitting at John Lightfoot himself to strike down this son.

But though the professor thought and thought again no plan came to him that seemed to promise safety for himself. He did not intend to involve himself if he carried out this desperate thing.

Sanderson walked that room all night, maundering and muttering; and in the morning his face was whiter and his eyes brighter than ever.

Yet he had regained in a measure his self-control. And he seated himself at his desk and began to plan for his safety.

"Fortunately this is Saturday and no school," he thought. "I shall remain in the house all day and by to-morrow I shall be myself again. No one will believe that story. I shall brand it as an unmitigated falsehood, and will prove it so."

By and by a ring of the door-bell made him jump with nervousness.

He looked at his white face in the glass, tried to coax a smile into it and then went out to see who was there.

He concealed his alarm when he saw Kennedy, the constable.

It seemed ominous when Kennedy did not bow or show him the usual civility.

"Good morning, Mr. Kennedy," said Sanderson amiably. "This is a beautiful morning."

For reply Kennedy took a document from his pocket.

"Prof. Sanderson," he began stiffly, "I have here a warrant for your arrest on a charge of attempted murder last evening in this house, and——"

Sanderson trembled visibly; but he was now acting.

"What?" he gasped.

"Just so; there's the warrant! It was sworn out this morning by Jack Lightfoot, who says you tried to kill him here last night when he called on you. And the paper, as you'll see, orders me to get that walking-stick of yours and bring it into court."

Sanderson's fingers shook as he examined the warrant.

"Why, the preposterousness of the idea! The young scoundrel! He says that I tried to kill him here last night?"

He stopped the shaking of his hands.

"Mr. Kennedy"—he looked the constable in the face—"this is a most preposterous thing and astonishes me beyond measure. I don't understand it. But I'll go with you, of course."

"And bring the cane."

"Certainly I'll get the cane. Just wait for me a moment. That trial is to be right away, I see. The idea! What ever induced that young scapegrace to make such a groundless charge against me?"

Kennedy was staring. The fact that the professor had looked startled and agitated and that his face was uncommonly white were most natural things, if this came as a surprise to him.

But Jack Lightfoot! Kennedy had always believed Jack to be a truthful boy.

He looked earnestly at the professor as the latter turned back into the house to get the cane, and seemed to be wondering if it were not his duty to keep Sanderson in sight.

Sanderson returned quickly.

"Why do you wish the cane?" he asked blandly, apparently forgetting the contents of the warrant he had read. "He declares that I struck him with this, does he."

"He says it's a sword-cane and that you tried to run him through with it."

"How absurd!" cried Sanderson, stepping out into the yard.

Kennedy took the cane and examined it, seeing that it was apparently the ebony cane Sanderson always carried.

"That the story is a lie out of whole cloth, Kennedy, you can see by inspecting the cane. It is an ordinary walking-stick. He says it's a sword-cane, does he? Ha! ha!"

Sanderson actually laughed.

Kennedy tried to discover the hidden spring which he supposed the cane had and found nothing. The ebony cane was but a black walking-stick, after all.

"This is the only cane of the kind you have?"

Again Sanderson laughed.

"Search the house if you doubt it; I never had any other cane. You have seen it a thousand times."

Kennedy could not find the spring in the cane. This was not a sword-cane. What did it mean?

Jack Lightfoot had not been in favor of proceeding legally against Prof. Sanderson, knowing that when it came to testifying against Sanderson the latter could tell a story that would refute anything he could say; but Tom's father had favored it, and so had Jack's mother. Mrs. Lightfoot wished to have Sanderson bound over to keep the peace, since she now feared for Jack's life.

The court-room where Justice Prendergast presided was crowded with excited spectators when Kennedy arrived with Sanderson walking coolly by his side.

The professor stared mildly at the people who tried to look him out of countenance.

It was a wild and exciting morning, the full details of which we shall not give here.

The justice heard Jack's story and then heard Sanderson's in total denial of it, and inspected the cane.

Sanderson claimed that he had two mortgages against the Lightfoot home, which he had held a long time without interest merely because he did not wish to oppress a woman who was a widow. He said he had called on her at last, and had made his desires known very emphatically, but without any malice.

Later, he said, Jack had called on him to see about the mortgages. He refused to show them, inasmuch as he was not dealing with Jack, but with his mother. Then, he claimed, Jack had surreptitiously opened a drawer of his desk while he was absent for a moment from the room, and had found what he claimed to be a release of the first and larger mortgage.

"This is what he found!" he explained blandly, and gave to the justice a written paper.

"If you will examine it you will see that it is merely a memorandum made by me concerning the mortgage, and not a release, as he thought.

"When I took it away from him he became angered and attacked me violently, and in defending myself I used that cane. I submit the cane in evidence. If his story is true, that is a sword-cane."

Jack felt that he had lost, though he tried to refute some of this testimony.

Prendergast looked hard at Sanderson when he was unable to pull the cane apart or find the hidden spring which would be there if it were a sword-cane.

"You do not object, professor, if I break this cane?" he asked. "That will tell the story."

"Not at all," said Sanderson.

There was a smile of triumph on his white face.

Prendergast broke the cane across his knee, splintering it.

He looked at the broken parts and held them up.

The cane was *not* a sword-cane.

A murmur ran round the room.

"Justice Prendergast," said Sanderson, "you—as well as every one here—have seen me with that cane many times. You must be able to identify it. It is the only cane I have. And if that is doubted I am willing that a search may be made of my house for another. I offered to let Mr. Kennedy make that search when he called there."

There was a good deal of partisanship in Cranford, and because of it Jack had his full share of enemies. These looked at him to see how he would take this and they saw that his face was red, as if he were covered with confusion.

Jack's face was red because of the fact that he knew he had lost in this case and that many people would believe he had lied simply to injure Sanderson. It was enough to make his face red.

"The case is dismissed!" said Prendergast.

And Justice Prendergast had been Jack Lightfoot's friend.

CHAPTER V.

JACK DISCOURAGED.

When Jack Lightfoot appeared among his friends at the gym that evening he was in a very sober frame of mind. His uncle, Tom Lightfoot's father, had said he would take care of those mortgages so that it would not be necessary for Jack's mother to give up her pleasant home. Mrs. Lightfoot's pride had made her desire to refuse this offer of help, yet she had yielded.

Though glad to have this offer, for it showed that

Jack still had the sympathy's of Tom's father, Jack was not satisfied.

He strongly reiterated to Tom's father his declaration that he had seen a release of the first mortgage, and, therefore, that mortgage ought not to be paid a second time.

Jack's thoughts had been of his father, marooned somewhere in the South Pacific. Would he ever return to his home and family in Cranford

Jack was now determined to quit school and go to work at something. If Tom's father was at last compelled to pay those mortgages Jack would consider it a debt he owed personally to his uncle and which he must pay some day.

As a consequence he felt that he could not afford to remain in school longer, when he ought to be at work somewhere earning money with which to meet that debt.

It is small wonder, therefore, that his manner was sober when he faced his young friends in the gym.

They swarmed round him as usual, and he was pleased to note that none of them seemed alienated.

They had been talking of the surprising arrest of Prof. Sanderson and of the fact that Jack had failed to make the case stand against him.

"Gol-darn if I wouldn't like tew have seen him tuck tew jail, anyhow!" Jubal had declared. "He deserves it on gen'ral princerples. That professor's a slick un, and he got away with Jack this mornin'! I'm sorry fer Jack, tew."

"Do you suppose he really did attack Jack?" Ned Skeen asked.

And then Jubal had threatened to "hit" Ned for doubting Jack's truthfulness.

Thus the gym had been stewing; but all the talk stopped as Jack entered and the boys crowded round him.

"You're a little late," said Jubal, extending his hard hand. "But better late than never. I was jist thinking abaout that bow-and-arrow huntin' trip we tuck last fall when we faound that my uncle had been killed out there in the woods. That gits intew my coco ever' onc't in a while and buzzes like a busy leetle bee."

Jubal had really thought of that once or twice dur-

ing the evening, and so did not consider that he was falsifying in pretending that he had been thinking of it just at that moment.

Lafe Lampton, wishing, like Jubal, to turn the talk into some channel that should not concern Prof. Sanderson, began to brag of the abilities of the Cranford eleven to "wipe up the earth" with any eleven in that part of the country.

"We done it, tew!" declared Jubal, falling in with the idea and understanding what Lafe was up to.

But Ned Skeen "knocked the fat into the fire."

"Have you seen Sanderson since the trial?" he asked abruptly.

Ned professed to be Jack's friend, and he was generally, but he was not the close, firm friend that Lafe Lampton had long been and Jubal Marlin was now showing himself to be.

But Jack was not disconcerted by Ned's question.

"No, I haven't seen him since the trial."

"It was funny about that cane," was Ned's next comment.

Many people in Cranford thought it was "funny" about that cane, by which they meant that it was strange and inexplicable.

"Not so funny as it might be," was Jack's answer.

"But it wasn't a sword-cane!"

"That one wasn't."

"That one?"

"It's plain to me that Sanderson has two canes that look exactly alike. He left the sword-cane at home and brought the other down to Prendergast's courtroom. That's how it happened."

"But he offered to let Kennedy search for it at the house and said he'd let Prendergast send some one to search for it."

"Cut it out!" growled Lafe, losing his temper. "Are you a friend of Jack or of Sanderson?"

"Jack, of course."

"Then cut it out! You talk as if you didn't believe what Jack told about it."

He had ceased to nibble his inevitable apple, and his sky-blue eyes had taken on an angry light that made them burn and flash.

It was not often that Lafe Lampton looked thus.

"I was just wondering about the singularity of it," Ned apologized and then subsided.

Ned had spoken truly. He did not wish to doubt Jack. He had simply wondered about the singularity of it, and had put his wonderment into words. Ned lacked tact at times.

"Fellows," said Jack, taking the chair he usually occupied while his friends gathered round him, "I've concluded to leave the high school, and——"

"What?"

A dozen voices cried the word at once.

"And, of course, shall then have to resign my position as president of the gym club and drop out of the football eleven and all the other school teams."

"Why? Because of what happened to-day!" cried Ned, genuinely surprised now.

"Because I must go to work."

Jack looked into the flushed faces of his time-tried friends.

"It isn't going to be pleasant, fellows, and that's a fact," he said. "But when a thing needs to be done—well, it needs to be done."

"What's the hurry?" queried Lampton.

The angry light had fled from his face to be replaced by a look of surprise and pain.

"I think it's better," was Jack's only explanation.

"I want to go to work."

"But what about some of those trips you've been contemplating?" asked Ned. "You've been figuring on having some high old times, you know."

"They've gone by the board. I'm going to work."

Lafe Lampton gained control of himself with a jerk. He took some peanuts out of a pocket, cracked open one of them and set the kernels in his mouth. As he did so he laughed, for he knew that to Jack a laugh was often as good as a tonic.

"Jack," he said, "some other fellows haven't been consulted about that. You've been making those things up all by yourself, without consulting me a little bit. We ain't going to let you resign from this club, and do all the other nonsense you've talked about. We'll keep you here, if we have to tie you."

"Sure thing!" cried Bob Brewster. "We've got to have somebody to help us win games."

"Fellows, I'm afraid I'm out of it," said Jack, and he said it seriously.

CHAPTER VI.

SANDERSON MEETS OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

Throughout the day, after his victory over Jack Lightfoot, Prof. Sanderson maintained his triumphant and confident mood. He was calm and seemingly undisturbed, and his white face was set in a smile.

To the people who called on him—the most of them were drawn by curiosity—he talked impassively of the trial and of the astounding fact that Jack Lightfoot should make such a charge and expect sensible people to believe it.

He exhibited to these people the cane broken by Justice Prendergast, and asked them what they thought of a boy whose imagination could make him believe that such a cane was a sword-cane and that he had been murderously attacked with it.

"I struck him over the head with this cane after he had been into the drawer of my desk and had talked insultingly to me; but how he could expect to make people believe I had assaulted him with a sword-cane passes my understanding."

Some of the visitors—many of them, in fact—declared that it also passed theirs.

It is almost needless to say that the little town of Cranford was seething with excitement. Nothing but the astonishing charges brought by Jack, and the trial before Prendergast, were thought of, or talked about.

And every man and woman had an opinion on the subject. Naturally, the friends of Jack Lightfoot stood up for him, and as naturally those who admired and respected Sanderson stood up for him. Hence the town was divided into two warring camps and hot talk and hot arguments occurred with remarkable frequency. The thing had taken Cranford by the ears.

But when night came and darkness settled again on the town the mood of Prof. Sanderson changed. It was as if the darkness had summoned once more that black madness that had owned him the previous evening and night.

He had thought all day of Jack Lightfoot, and now his inclination took once more that murderous turn.

The wild desire to take vengeance on Jack as the chief representative of John Lightfoot's family again came over him.

He mentally reviewed those six terrible years spent in prison. John Lightfoot had put him there.

As this mental change came upon Sanderson he did not recognize it for what it was—a recurrence of a temporary madness that increased slowly from year to year and came to him chiefly at night, but fancied that it was an anger produced by thoughts of the wrongs done him.

Yet when under the influence of these temporary mental lapses Prof. Sanderson was in some respects as much of a madman as any in an asylum for the insane.

He was more dangerous than a recognized madman, for he was supposed to be entirely sane, and he was so crafty that even an alienist who had made a study of the mind and its diseases might have been deceived by him.

To himself he seemed to be able to think as clearly as ever, and in many ways he could. For he was a monomaniac—crazy on this one subject.

With that mad spell of inhuman rage again possessing him, he went down into his cellar, opened the door of the furnace and stared with hot eyes at the fire.

"Nothing but his death will satisfy me now!" he whispered, speaking hollowly. "His death! And then the death of John Lightfoot, if he ever returns. After that I don't care what becomes of me. All these years I have lived for revenge and now I intend to sup on it to my fill. Ha! ha! Revenge—a revenge for those torturing six years!"

He slowly closed the furnace door, after shoveling in more coal, and returned to his room above.

As he did so he heard a violent ring at the front door.

He started guiltily, feeling almost as if his very thoughts had been read by some one outside, and that some one was coming to arrest him for harboring them.

He controlled himself, looked at his white face in the mirror and then, pulling at his benevolent side-whiskers, he went to open the door and see who was there.

"Hello, pal!" were the words that surprised him,

when he had drawn the door open and saw two men standing in the darkness.

They crowded close up to him.

He was about to shut the door in their faces, for their manner frightened him; but one thrust a foot through the opening.

"Go slow, pal," he said, "we've jist come to make a little call and we don't intend to be put off this way."

"Who are you?" Sanderson inquired hoarsely.

The answer was a laugh as hoarse as his words.

"Cut our acquaintance, eh?"

"I'm sure I never saw you before. Remove your foot, please."

He tried to remove it by force.

"Go slow, pal! Jist let us in and then we'll exhibit our honest faces and you'll remember us."

"I don't know you, I'm sure, and I've no desire to; leave my house, please."

His voice trembled.

The man bent nearer, fixing the professor with his staring eyes.

"Don't remember Number Thirteen when you worked with him four years at the bench? Take another think, pal."

Prof. Sanderson fell back as if he had been hit in the face.

Before he could recover the two men had crowded into the hall and closed the door after them.

The hall was lighted and Sanderson stared at them, his face whiter than ever.

"Number Thirteen!" he gasped, his eyes roving from the one who had spoken to the second man.

"Sure thing! And this is Dicky Donovan. He had the cell next to you, you'll reck'lect; and his number was twenty-three."

They were a pair of prison birds who had done time in the same prison with him. He had known them well once.

Sanderson reeled along the hall like a drunken man leading the way to the room where he usually received callers. It was separated well from the other parts of the house and he liked it for that, for his secretive nature made him desire that even ordinary matters should be kept as secret as possible, and servants were

never permitted to come to that room without being ordered there.

When he and the two men were in this apartment—it was the room in which he had received and attacked Jack Lightfoot—he closed and locked the door behind him, and then sank, perspiring and trembling, into a chair.

The two men coolly helped themselves to seats and glanced calmly about them, as if they were burglars sizing up the place and estimating how much they might make by "cracking the crib."

Sanderson saw and observed the look, and it served in a measure to restore his equanimity. These were jailbirds. Why should he fear them? There was no good reason whatever! Yet they had surprised and upset him terribly.

"Glad to see you," he said at length, controlling his voice and forcing a smile into his white face.

"Pal, you didn't act it!" said Donovan.

"I was startled, of course. And I didn't know who you were. You observed that I opened the door as soon as you told me who you were."

"Yes, we noticed that!" said the one who had been the first speaker, and he laughed as if the thing were comical. "You fairly fell out of it when I said Number Thirteen."

He laughed again, fairly hugging himself, for it seemed to him a great joke.

His name was Ross; and as he sat humped up in his chair, with his short legs drawn up under him, his thick, short body and his mottled face and shabby, greenish clothing made him look like a greenish, mottled frog.

"Glad to see us, I s'pose, pal; so glad that you 'most threw a fit? It was on'y by chance that we knowed you was here, too. We come nigh missin' callin' on you."

Sanderson eyed them cautiously with his eyes half closed. He had sunk back into his chair and was trying to get control of himself. It was a difficult thing to do, for that fire of madness beat like a drum in his brain and all his thoughts were of Jack Lightfoot and revenge.

Then like a flash came the thought that these men

had been sent to him by some special providence that favors evil and he could probably use them.

His manner changed, a thing they noted at once. He became cordial.

"I'm glad you came," he declared, his eyes flashing. "It's a long time since we met. How did you know I was here? I'm under a different name now."

He sank his voice to a whisper.

"We was laying out by the road there and seen you go by; and after you was gone we asked a kid who you was, and learned that you was the duke that's runnin' a swell brain factory in this burg and makin' money doin' it. The kid pointed out your house to us. You owe us thanks fer not callin' on you in the day-time."

"I do," he acknowledged. "It was thoughtful of you."

"We figgered that a swell cove runnin' a brain hatchery like that wouldn't want his neighbors to know what kind of callers he had, and so we laid over till night and caught the freight."

He laughed, still squatting and humping himself up like a big frog.

"Mebbe you've got somethin' ter eat and somethin' good to drink?" said the man called Donovan.

"Well, yes, I have; pardon me for forgetting that."

Sanderson arose and left the room instead of calling a servant.

In a minute he was back with a bottle and glasses, and some bread and slices of cold ham which he had hastily made into sandwiches.

"Tell me of yourselves," he invited, as they proceeded to help themselves. "You know when I got out. The people here know nothing of that and I don't want them to, for it would ruin me here. I had a hard time for a while, but I finally struck it here. I have a fine education, you know, and that helped me. And now I'm all right."

"Here's to you!" said Donovan, lifting his glass filled with wine from the bottle.

They drank to his health.

"We got out," said Ross, "and here we air; that's all there is to it. We've been trying the honest lay."

"Does it pay?"

"Nit—it don't!" growled Donovan. "We ain't had anything but hand-outs fer a week. I'm ready fer crib-crackin' ag'in, I am."

"And the prison again, if you begin it," said Ross, biting into his sandwich. "Number Seventeen"—that had been Sanderson's prison number—"has the right of it. See how smug and snug he is in this berth here."

"Yes; if only we had a berth like it, which we ain't, and ain't ever likely to have. If we don't strike some way of gittin' the dough what air we to do? Can you answer me that?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEADLY COMPACT.

Prof. Sanderson sat listening to the talk of these men.

All the time he was thinking hard on the one subject that now absorbed him.

He had felt triumphant because Jack Lightfoot had been brought to confusion. But what a sting that triumph held! He, Prof. Sanderson, the head of the Cranford Academy, had been dragged to a justice's court, to be examined on the charge of attempted murder. He had been subjected to the ignominy and shame of an arrest in the town where he fancied he stood so high.

And Jack Lightfoot, whom he hated with all the bitterness of a warped mind, had done that for him, just as it had been Jack's father who appeared against him on that former occasion.

What then was the petty triumph on which he had plumed himself? It was nothing. Jack was still free and capable of concocting more evil. No doubt, so Sanderson thought, he was even then planning with his friends how he might further compromise and humiliate this man who was his avowed enemy.

The sting of it! It burned now in Sanderson's temporarily disordered brain like a virulent poison.

Yet of the thoughts and desires that ran thus riot in his mind Sanderson at the moment said nothing.

He simply sat staring at the two men who were drinking and eating in his room, and a thin smile curved his lips. He seemed to be listening to their talk and

comments, and now and then put in a word to show that he was awake.

His face was as white as tallow and a film of perspiration bathed his high forehead.

"You'd do anything for money, I reckon," said Ross, in answer to the complaints of his friend.

"I would," said Donovan, pouring out for himself another glass of wine. "Am I better than other men? It's jist a bluff a feller makes when he claims there air things he wouldn't do for money. He ain't never been tested, that's all. Look at the big politicians. Don't they all steal? Look at the bankers and business men. Ain't they swindlin' and graftin' all the time? They don't crack cribs, same's you and I, but they do worse. Ain't every man settin' some kind of a trap for every other man? They make a bluff of bein' honest, and I don't; and that's the only difference I see."

Ross laughed.

"You've got the rights of some of it, Donovan," he admitted. "But it pays to play honest, anyway. Them fellers play honest; and if they're caught with the goods, they've got some scheme up by which they can fool the people into thinking they come by 'em honestly. When you crack a crib and get hauled up you can't play that. You're caught foul."

"It's a shame fer a man to let himself git caught," said Donovan. "Ain't that so, Number Seventeen? You never let yourself git caught any more, I'll warrant? Ain't that so? You plays pious and good, and everybody credits you with sprouting angel wings under yer coat. I'm bound that's the truth of it."

Sanderson laughed in a short, mirthless cackle.

"I keep straight," he said; "yet even to-day I was pinched."

Ross and Donovan raised themselves and looked at him.

"What?" they cried in one voice.

"You didn't hear of that? It happened only to-day."

"You wasn't slick enough?" gasped Donovan.

Sanderson glanced craftily round the room and at the windows, the blinds of which were tightly closed.

"I played the fool," he admitted.

"So they all do, when they git caught," said Dono-

van significantly. "It's the big ones that never play the fool that keep safe."

"I played the fool. You remember I told you once of the man who sent me up."

"I remember that," said Ross.

"He used to live in this town, though he isn't here now."

"You done him up?" said Donovan brutally.

"No; he went to the Klondike on a wild-goose chase after gold, and then sailed on a crazy cruise into the South Pacific hunting for pearl islands that some fool up there told him about. He's been gone for years. I always hoped, and believed, he was dead, until lately. Then a young fellow dropped into this town who had been wrecked on an island in the South Pacific and had there met him. The young fellow and the man with him escaped from that island, but the man I'm speaking of is there yet, unable to get away, and I hope he will stay there forever, or until he's too dead to do me any more harm."

"What's that got to do with your arrest to-day?" questioned Ross.

"Everything. The man left a son who lives here with his mother and sister. He's the image of his father, or will be some day; and every time I see him I think of the man who sent me up and I hate him."

He looked about again, as if to make sure he could not be heard; and he had already lowered his voice.

"You got into trouble with the kid?" said Donovan.

"I did, almost from the start. If I could have killed him I would have done it."

Prof. Sanderson's monomania made him reckless now of consequences, so far as these two men were concerned. But, then, he fancied he could trust them; they were criminals, just out of prison. If they should be led to speak too freely no one would believe anything they might say. It seemed to him safe to speak to them thus, and he had an object in view which required this explanation.

"I thought to do differently—I planned to ruin that man's family and disgrace his son."

He stepped to the desk near by and took out some papers.

These he displayed as he returned to his seat.

"Mortgages," said Ross, eying them critically.

"Yes, one is; the other professes to be."

"Forged?" said Ross. "You was always good at that."

"We'll not use so harsh a word," was the crafty answer.

"Just written up and signed by a fellow who hadn't any right to," said Ross, winking significantly. "I've known of such things."

"The first"—Sanderson held it up—"is genuine; but it was paid off by that man before he started for the Klondike gold-fields. The release came into my hands and I failed to have it made a matter of public record. And the only men who know anything about it, except that fool in the South Pacific, are dead."

He put the mortgages back in their envelope with the release.

"I threatened yesterday to foreclose these and turn the family out on the streets. Because of that the young fellow came up here and we had some words. I lost my temper and struck at him, and we had a fight. For that he to-day had me arrested."

"But you came off clear?" asked Donovan.

"I did."

"And you've still got the mortgages," said Ross.

Sanderson hardly heard him. In his brain hate of Jack Lightfoot was again boiling, and with it thoughts of the humiliation to which he had that day been subjected. The old cry for revenge rang in his soul.

"I came off clear, but not even; I shall never be even with that young hound while he is above ground."

The manner in which he said it was enough to make the two villains sit up and take notice. It revealed a depth of deadly malignity they had not guessed.

"You hate him some, I see," said Ross.

"Hate him? I——"

He was about to say more, but caution stayed him.

Rising, he softly left the room, after putting the mortgages back in the drawer. He was gone but a minute, but in that time he made sure that no one was in or near that part of the house.

It was a long enough time, too, for Donovan to abstract the mortgages and the release from the drawer and stow them in one of his pockets.

When Sanderson returned he looked straight at Donovan, a look that the latter met with much calm.

"I heard you say that you would do anything for money," said Sanderson, sinking his voice to a low growl which was more indistinct than any whisper.

"Pal, anything that's safe, I meant; there's some things I wouldn't do, because they're too risky."

"Not even for money?"

"What's the good of money if it puts a rope round yer neck?"

"But in this case it wouldn't."

Ross sat looking hard at Sanderson.

"It's about this boy?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You tried to kill him and failed and now you want us to undertake it."

"You're good at guessing," Sanderson admitted.

"Show us the money first," said Donovan.

"And then you'd fail to do the job."

"I don't trust nobody, specially not a cove that makes out he's saintly and wants to hire others to do his work fer him. We gits a look at the dough first, see?"

The sweat was streaming from the professor's high, white forehead and his eyes held a deadly light.

If ever a man was insane Sanderson was insane at that moment. His long-suppressed hate against John Lightfoot, together with those terrible years in prison, had certainly unbalanced his mind.

Ross, who was much the more acute of the two men, saw that maniac glare of the eyes, and drew back involuntarily.

Yet a moment later Sanderson seemed to have conquered the raging fit of hate that had swept over him, and was once again outwardly calm.

But he had not changed otherwise; he still sought the life of Jack Lightfoot.

"How much money do you want for the job?" he asked cautiously.

"How's it to be done?" said Donovan, as cautious.

"There's a lake just north of town," said Sanderson. "It's deep and dark, and it will never tell secrets if the thing is gone about right."

"Tap him on the head some night and then sink him in the lake," said Donovan.

"Wouldn't it be a good way?"

"We don't know him—we don't know yit who he is."

Sanderson leaned forward and whispered the name of Jack Lightfoot.

"Just a boy," he added; "the thing will be easy."

"But I take it he's got friends," said Ross.

"Yes; but if he drops out of sight mysteriously how will that make any difference?"

"It might make a difference to you after that trouble you've had with him."

"I'll take the risk."

"When could this be done?" asked Donovan.

"If you knew him, so as to spot him the minute you set eyes on him, it might be done to-night; it's a dark night. But to-morrow night will be as dark. There are plenty of boats by the lake. You can steal one and row out into the lake. Then you can return the boat. No one can ever know of it."

"But you?" questioned Ross again.

"I'll look out for myself. Do the job to-morrow night. There's going to be a meeting after church services and I'll stay to that. Then I'll get myself invited to some friend's home and will remain with that friend all night. I'll fix it so that I'll be in the public eye all evening and with that friend the balance of the night. So, even if suspicion should be turned against me, I can prove that I had no hand in it; and I'll be in shape to make it warm for whoever points the finger of suspicion at me."

Donovan stared at Sanderson with admiration.

"You always had a good head fer plannin'. I reckon that's why you're holdin' down this soft job here."

He tapped the carpet with his heavy boots and looked round the well-furnished room.

"A good head is a great thing and I've always said it."

"Will you do the job?"

Sanderson directed his remark to Donovan, as if recognizing him as the greater villain and the more hardened.

"We haven't seen the color of your money yet," Ross reminded.

"We works only fer pay," said Donovan composedly. "Cough up the dough."

"How much?"

"Five thousand."

"I haven't that much money. Man, you're crazy."

"I'm thinking you are," said Ross bluntly.

"How much can you make it?" asked Donovan.

Sanderson hesitated and trembled.

"I—I might make it two thousand."

He thought of these mortgages. He believed by forcing payment of those he could thus get back the two thousand; and that was as much money as he could raise at the time. In fact, he knew he would have to strain his credit to get that.

"Two thousand," he said.

Donovan haggled for more.

"I'd give you more if I had it."

"And we gits it right down in our fists?" said Donovan.

"I can pay you five hundred dollars down. By a lucky chance I have that amount here. I shall have to raise the rest, and will pay you when the thing is done."

There was further haggling and charges of dishonesty and lying.

But the foul contract was completed at last.

"I'll claim that I have a debt that I must meet at once, and in that way I'll get the money for you on Monday, without bringing suspicion on myself," Sanderson promised.

Thus it was settled finally.

That night, like the previous night, Sanderson slept not a wink.

The deed he had planned rose before him. He did not shudder at it, but contemplated it with delight.

The hate mania intoxicated and consumed him.

In the morning he looked like a ghost, with white face, staring, hollow eyes and a walk that seemed that of a prematurely old man.

People who met him noted his changed appearance, and the thing created sympathy for him, for they supposed he was suffering from the shock of the arrest and trial of the previous day.

But with the coming of day and the passing of that strange, wild rage there came a change of mind.

He wished now he had not met those two villains, Donovan and Ross. Caution returned to him and with it fear for his personal safety. The mania had passed, like a fit of intoxication, leaving remorse and regret.

In this changed state he sought for Donovan and Ross, but could not find them.

He dared not ask questions.

As the day passed his anxiety increased until, as night came on again, he was almost on the point of writing to Jack Lightfoot an anonymous note of warning.

But again, as darkness came, that strange mania of hate and desire for revenge took complete possession of him. He became once more the murderer at heart, desiring the death of Jack Lightfoot; and now he was glad that he had not met those two villains and countermanded his deadly order.

"To-night—to-night!" he whispered, stepping out to view the night sky. "The deed is to be done to-night!"

Darkness lay over the face of the lake.

"I must see to it," he thought, "that suspicion cannot be turned toward me."

And he set out, seeking the home of a friend, for he purposed to be in the view of some one until morning dawned again.

Yet he was so shaken by the mania that poisoned his brain again that he was really not in a good condition to play the part he had assigned himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S CAPTURE.

Having come to a manly decision as to what he should do now, Jack Lightfoot was feeling in a much better frame of mind. He intended to leave school, and already he had found where he could get a good position, by which he might earn enough to support his mother and sister and lay by a little with which to meet his father's indebtedness.

When that ominous night came in which Sanderson, after looking at the dark sky and the dark lake, took his way to the home of an acquaintance, so that he might have a good alibi, Jack Lightfoot set out for the residence of his uncle, Tom Lightfoot's father.

Tom's uncle, seeing that Jack was resolutely determined to shift for himself and make his own way in the world, had been the one who had secured for Jack the promise of a position as soon as he wished it.

Jack wanted to have a further talk with Tom and his uncle.

As he walked along, feeling in a brave and confident frame of mind and giving little enough thought to Prof. Sanderson or his machinations, he stumbled against something that was drawn tightly across the path in front of him; and the next moment he had pitched head-first into what seemed a smothering bag.

Jack struggled to throw off the bag into which he had run his head in the darkness, and felt it tighten round his head and his shoulders.

Then, filled with quick alarm, he tried to cry out, but the folds of the bag kept him from doing even that.

Finding that he could not summon help, Jack began to struggle to free himself; but even as he struggled and tried to shout, he felt himself lifted bodily from the ground and borne along with a swinging motion.

He continued to struggle and to claw at the smothering thing that enmeshed his head, but he was only wasting his strength. By and by the choking sensation became so oppressive that he knew he was smothering.

Yet the men who had captured him thus cleverly ran straight on, Jack did not know where nor in what direction.

When they put down the bag, beyond the limits of the town and drew aside the choking folds, Jack had succumbed to insensibility.

One of the men, it was Donovan, looked about.

"Close by the lake," he said.

Yet, instead of searching for a boat or performing the murderous deed expected by Sanderson, they again drew the smothering folds round the head of the unconscious boy and, lifting their burden, they set out at almost a jog-trot along the lake shore.

Jack returned to consciousness while being thus borne on. He struggled. The choking folds of the bag had not been so tightly drawn and he could

breathe, and it was that which had brought a return of consciousness.

He cried out from within the bag.

Then he felt himself lowered to the ground.

When the folds of the bag were cast aside and he tried to rise a heavy hand clutched his shoulder.

"Easy now!" warned a hoarse voice.

"Who are you?" Jack demanded.

"Friends."

"Would friends treat me in this way?"

He knew they were not friends.

"We're jist some school kids havin' fun with you — this is what they calls a hazing."

Jack tried to rise again, but the man threw him backward.

"This is no hazing."

"Oh, ain't it?"

"You know it isn't. Let me go, you scoundrel!"

"That's good," said Donovan, who had done the speaking for the two men. "We likes gentle words like that; they makes us have all sorts of good feelin's fer you; so sling 'em plenty."

A great rage flamed in Jack's heart, drowning the fear and the surprise that had been on him.

He got Donovan by the leg and then again endeavored to rise, at the same time trying to throw the man down.

He succeeded in tripping Donovan, but he did not himself rise, for Ross caught him and hurled him violently to the earth.

The fight which Jack made for liberty did not end until he was tumbled once more into the smothering bag.

Then, helpless again and feeling again that he was choking, he was lifted and borne on; with the men talking in guff voices.

They were not running now, but taking their time, seeming no longer in a hurry.

Jack did not know where he had been taken, though he was still close by the shore of the lake; but he had a good idea that he was in great peril and the desire to escape was strong. He struggled vainly, drawing a laugh now and then from the men.

When Jack was put down again, after a long time,

being as much dead as alive, he knew that he was in a house of some kind, for his back was on hard boards, and he felt his body touch against a side wall.

The choking folds were drawn away from his face, and a match being struck he saw that he seemed to be in a small house; and then recognition came to him and he knew where he was. It was the duck hunters' cabin, or hut, down by the western end of the lake and not far from Laurel River.

The match was applied to a candle which one of the ruffians had provided, and Jack beheld the faces of his captors.

Donovan was a short-legged, thick-bodied scoundrel of fifty years, with a mottled face and a round, bullet head.

The other man, Ross, was taller and better-looking and seemed altogether the more intelligent; yet, he, too, had all the marks of a villain, only that he looked more crafty than the other.

"Why did you bring me here?" Jack demanded.

Donovan laughed.

"For the fun of seeing you kick and thrash round in that bag."

"If that is all you'll let me go now."

"Look you here," said Ross. "Do you know what we captured you for?"

"I don't," Jack confessed.

"We was hired to kill you."

It was natural, perhaps, that Jack should think instantly of Prof. Sanderson.

"And we're goin' to do it," said Donovan, "if you gives us any of your jaw."

This terrible threat did not terrify Jack as much as might be supposed. If these men had been hired to kill him he saw that they did not intend to do the deed at once; and a postponement offered hope.

The reader knows that Jack Lightfoot was a boy of strong courage and nerve. There were times when he slumped under comparatively small things, like the loss of a ball game, or the feeling that a friend had turned against him. But when it came to real physical peril there was a good deal of the hero in Jack Lightfoot.

He was certain now that he was in danger of the most deadly sort. Yet he was able to think more clearly than when first captured, and, the surprise and shock of that having in a measure passed away, he could look composedly at these men who talked so coolly of murdering him.

"You were paid to capture me and bring me here and then kill me?" he asked.

"Kid, we was, and we're likely to do it," said Donovan.

He stood looking at Jack by the light of the candle, while Ross, with the big bag in which Jack had been held, was covering the one small window so that the light of the candle could not be seen by any one outside.

Yet this was so lonely a place and so far removed from the roads and the town that there seemed scarcely any need of this caution.

"How much were you to get for this?" Jack asked.

"That's all right, kid; we was to git paid fer it. So don't give us any of your jaw; we don't want to hurry it."

Jack was thinking quickly. He saw that he was in the power of these men. Both were large and strong. Donovan, who was the shorter, looked to have the strength of a giant in those heavy shoulders and short arms and legs. Jack was a good fighter and clever with his fists, but only a monumental self-conceit could have made him think he was the equal in fighting ability with those two men.

Therefore, he saw that if he got out of this scrape it would be through craft and cleverness, or by gaining their good-will.

Donovan evidently did not like the way Jack had already addressed him. It was a sufficient warning for such a clear-headed boy as Jack Lightfoot.

He sat against the wall in the corner with the light of the candle falling on his face.

"Maybe I can make it worth your while to treat me better than some one has hired you to do," he observed.

"We don't think it," said Donovan curtly.

Ross, having blinded the window, returned to the middle of the room, and there, drawing up an old stool, he sat down and narrowly inspected the face of the youthful prisoner.

He saw a handsome face, a little pale just now, with eyes a trifle wider than ordinary, yet a youthful face that held so much good in it, and altogether such manliness and character, that he was attracted by it.

Being the much more intelligent of the two, Ross was able to see things which escaped the comprehension of Donovan. For one thing, he saw that Jack Lightfoot was not an ordinary boy, but one full of life, pluck, determination and courage.

"It would be a pity to knife a kid like you," he said, as if voicing his thoughts.

"I hope you won't think that you have to," said Jack, looking him squarely in the eyes.

"Yes," admitted Ross, "there's better ways than that of treating a kid like you." Then he asked abruptly: "Does your dad look like you?"

"Hardly," said Jack, astonished by the question. "He's so much older, you know."

"He's a good-looking one, if he does! Now, tell me something about him and about yourself."

This seemed a singular request; yet Jack was so impressed by the belief that it would be well to cultivate the good-will of this man that he answered without hesitation.

"Do you reckon your dad's goin' to come back some time?"

"We hope so—we believe so; he's still living, or was not so many months ago."

Then he told of Reel Snodgrass, who had come from Bombay with a pretended Hindu called Boralmo, and of their being wrecked on the island which held his father and the ship's crew; and how Reel had brought him the information that his father was still living.

"I should think you'd organize an expedition to go and search for the old gent," said Ross.

"If one could know where to go we would have done so," said Jack. "The South Pacific is a big place and those islands are uncharted and unknown."

His face had saddened as he told the story of his father.

"I'm thinkin' you'll not see him again," said Donovan.

The tone in which he said it was so brutal that Jack wondered if Donovan meant that he was to be killed or that his father could not possibly return.

CHAPTER IX.

JACK'S DISAPPEARANCE.

The sensation created in Cranford by Jack Lightfoot's disappearance was something tremendous. Scarcely had there been anything that happened there to create such intense excitement.

The people had not yet ceased talking of Jack's trouble with Prof. Sanderson when this news came to start their tongues afresh. The story flew like the wind, and it was a great morning for the gossips and busybodies.

The knowledge that something had befallen Jack did not come until morning. Jack's mother and sister supposed that he had remained all night with Tom, and Tom believed he was at home.

Hence the surprise to Tom and to Jack's mother and sister was great when the former came down that

morning to see his cousin and learned he was not at home, and had not been seen since the evening before when he had set out to call at Tom's home.

Tom went at once to Lafe Lampton's, thinking the young athlete might have remained with Lafe, even though it was not like Jack to leave his mother in ignorance of where he spent his nights.

"Jimminy crickets!" Lafe gasped when, after inquiries, Tom told him that his cousin seemed to be missing. "If anything has happened to Jack I'll bet Sanderson knows about it!"

It was a thought that seemed to run through the minds of almost every one, as soon as it was bruited round that Jack Lightfoot had disappeared.

Yet, when some cautious inquiries were made, it was discovered that Sanderson had been at the home of a certain friend all night and was there at that moment, though preparing to set out for the academy.

Sanderson evinced great surprise when he heard the story.

"Why do you bring the news to me?" he asked of the one who told him.

"Every one is talking about it and I thought you'd be interested in knowing it," was the answer.

Sanderson bored his informant with his little, fishy eyes. He understood the man's motives thoroughly.

"A boy like Jack Lightfoot is too unreliable for any one to be worried about simply because he happens to have been away from home overnight. It's my opinion, based on some close observation of him, that he's done a good many things at night that he'd not like to have known."

"And you don't think, then, that anything has happened to him?"

"What could have happened to him?"

"That's what every one is wondering."

"Nothing happened to him unless it was by accident. He's foolhardy and has a high opinion of himself. He may have drowned himself accidentally in the lake."

Sanderson believed that at the moment the body of Jack Lightfoot reposed at the bottom of the lake; that he had been murdered and his body cast there by Donovan and Ross.

While talking with the man who brought him the news he was able to maintain an air of composure; but as soon as he was alone his whole body shook as with an ague, and when he looked at his face in a mirror he was almost terrified, it was so white, so like the face of a dead man.

Sanderson was having another revulsion of feeling.

He was wishing he had not tempted those scoundrels, Donovan and Ross. And he had fears, too, for himself. What if those rascals were captured and should confess, thus implicating him? He cowered before the glass, as he thought of that.

"I'm a coward," he admitted to himself; "a trembling coward!"

Truly he was; for only a coward would have done the things he had set out to do. But, then, it is to be remembered that Prof. Sanderson, at the time, was not wholly responsible mentally. He was the victim of a mania that possessed him. Yet that mania was self-produced to a certain extent, for it had come through his long brooding on thoughts of revenge and of the wrongs he fancied had been done him by John Lightfoot.

The excitement that convulsed the town of Cranford, when the hours passed and Jack Lightfoot was still missing, so permeated the academy that Prof. Sanderson found it impossible to conduct the school in the ordinary manner. No one could study or think of lessons; and Sanderson seemed to be mentally as much perturbed as any of his pupils.

At last he closed the school, saying that as parties were being formed to search for the missing youth he would dismiss the classes so that any of the young men of the academy who desired might join with those parties.

Phil Kirtland and Brodie Strawn, and some of the others of the boys who had been in Jack Lightfoot's eleven and on his baseball nine, hurried away at once, as anxious as any of Jack's closest friends.

Prof. Sanderson walked sedately—he was outwardly so, at least—back home. It was not his place to join in the frantic search.

A meeting of the high-school boys had been called at the gym and there searching parties were being organized.

Not to be outdone by the boys and the men, Kate Strawn and Nellie Conner drove along some of the roads leading from the town, looking white-faced and scared, and wondering what could have befallen Jack.

At Jack's home, however, the greatest distress and alarm prevailed. While others might think that Jack had gone away somewhere and would shortly return, and that all this turmoil over his disappearance was useless and foolish, Jack's mother and sister knew that something very wrong had happened—that something serious had befallen him. Jack was not a boy to go and remain away in that manner without sending word of his intentions.

As Kate and Nellie drove along the roads, talking only of Jack Lightfoot, they came to the little path that ran by the western end of the lake and led to the highway and the railroad, skirting the shores of Laurel River.

Kate was driving and she drew in the horse.

"I've been thinking, you know, that Jack may have been kidnaped and held somewhere for some reason that we don't understand. Now you remember the time when I was kidnaped and held in that old hut at this end of the lake?"

That had been the work of some young ruffians of Mildale, led by Tim Tewksbury, and the object had been to break Jack's football eleven so that it could not win the game to be played at Mildale that day. Kate and Brodie had together been captured and held in that hut by Tewksbury and his assistants.

Kate was not likely to forget that experience in a hurry; and she naturally thought of the hut when she came to the path which led from that direction and which, as she knew, passed near it along the end of the lake.

"We can go over there and see," said Nellie heroically.

"Yes, we can tie the horse here by the side of the road. Of course it isn't likely that Jack is there; but then he may be, and the boys and men may not think of that old duck hunter's hut at all. So he might be there, you know, and stay there all day."

"If we should find some men there?" said Nellie timidly.

"We can tell, maybe, if any one is at the hut without going close up to it," Kate suggested.

She sprang out of the vehicle, and Nellie doing the same, the horse was led beneath a tree and there tied.

Then they climbed the fence at the side of the road and set out through the brushy timber along the shore of the lake.

They were heading in the direction of the hut where all night and until that moment Jack Lightfoot had been held a close prisoner.

CHAPTER X.

JACK'S DESPERATE ATTEMPT.

The reader has already seen that Jack's captors had apparently changed their minds and their plans.

They had what they considered abundant and promising reasons for doing so.

In the first place, though they might not scruple to commit murder should that seem necessary to effect

their safety, they hesitated to kill any one when it could be avoided. Murder is an ugly thing, for which men are hanged now and then, and they feared the hangman's rope.

Besides, they figured that they could get their pay from Prof. Sanderson just the same. They could hold the boy in this hut, pretend to Sanderson they had killed him and sunk his body in the lake, and then let him go, after they had secured their reward.

Another thing which moved them was the possession of those mortgages, and particularly the release of the first mortgage, which Donovan had craftily taken from the drawer in Sanderson's room and transferred to his pocket.

The production of that release of the first mortgage would be a thing Sanderson could be expected to pay well to prevent. They could get additional money out of him, by threatening to send that release mortgage to the constable of the town, if he did not pay up, together with a story of how they came to have it. They knew that such a threat would frighten Sanderson.

Altogether, they fancied they had some beautiful schemes whereby they could scare money out of Sanderson.

In his half-insane fury Sanderson had unwittingly put his head in the lion's mouth, and was now in a position to feel the lion's teeth.

However, the two scamps intended to do nothing until the first hot search for Jack Lightfoot had blown over. They did not think they would be troubled in the distant hut that night, and they intended, when day came, to remove from it out into the brushy woods, and hide there.

However, when morning came they delayed their departure from the hut for various small reasons.

In the meantime, they had begun to talk freely again with Jack Lightfoot.

"You've got relatives in this town?" said Ross.

"Yes," Jack answered.

"Who are they?"

Jack informed him.

"Has that uncle of yours got some money?" was the next question.

Jack hesitated, seeing what they wanted.

"He hasn't much," he said hedging.

But they saw the truth, and knew that Jack's uncle was a man of means.

"We calculate we'll hold you, and pull his leg," said Ross. "He'll come down with a thousand dollars to have you safe back there, I reckon."

"I shouldn't ask him to."

Donovan laughed.

"Kid, don't trouble yerself; we'll do that!"

So here was another way by which they thought they could get money. They began to feel jubilant. In striking Cranford they seemed to have struck a gold mine.

They drew apart and talked together.

Their plans now included a demand on Sanderson for the payment due for the murder of Jack. After that they meant to communicate with Jack's uncle and demand a ransom. Then they would reappear before Sanderson, to his surprise, and ask for money for the restoration of the mortgage release. Surely, these were promising plans!

"I reckon we'd better slip out of here," said Donovan, looking at his cheap watch. "The day is kiting along, and somebody will be nosing round here soon, maybe. It'll be safer out in the woods, if it is colder."

The time was early winter, and the possibility of a prolonged stay in the woods did not afford a pleasant prospect; but they could do even that for money.

Ross drew the blind down from the window, for they meant to take that with them in their flight from the hut.

"Say," said Donovan, a thought striking him, "we'll have him write that note to his uncle now. Something might happen later so that he couldn't."

What he meant was that in their flight, if they were discovered and pursued, they might find it necessary to knife Jack, or Jack might be killed by a shot from his friends fired at his enemies. A note already written would be like a bird in the hand.

Ross read the thought in Donovan's mind.

"Just as you say," he remarked; "but we want to git out of here now pretty quick."

He threw down the bag he had removed from the window and came toward Jack, producing a pencil and a small note-book. From the note-book he tore a leaf.

"Kid," he said, though not unkindly, "we're going to ask you to write a note to that uncle you spoke about. You'll do it, because it will be healthy for you."

Jack looked at him with a smile. He still believed that it was the part of wisdom to court the goodwill of this man, and a new thought had come to him.

"How can I write it, with my hands tied?" he asked.

"Oh, we'll fix that all right," said Donovan.

Jack gave a glance at the window, which had been uncovered. Four little squares of glass were there in plain view, and a hole big enough to let his body through if he could reach it.

It was a desperate thought which had come to him. Ever since his capture he had been thinking vainly of some method of self-release. This was the first thing that offered any promise.

His face flushed and his heart seemed to rise up into his throat, as Donovan dropped down and applied the knife to the cords about his wrists.

If he but had the cords off his ankles! Could he reach that window with his feet tied? The thing looked unpromising, but Jack was in a desperate mood, ready to attempt anything that offered success even remotely.

Donovan sawed the cords loose with his knife, and Ross held forth the pencil and paper.

"We'll tell you what to write," said Ross.

The cords had dropped away from Jack's wrists.

Instead of taking the pencil and paper, Jack, with one hand, clutched the mortgage release which lay on the stool near and which they had been reading, and with the other tried to snatch the knife away from Donovan.

Donovan clung to the knife and fell back, roaring with surprise and sudden rage, while Ross, seeing Jack's movements, leaped at him.

With a quick upward jump Jack struck at Ross' stomach. He succeeded only in landing his feet against Ross' knees, but that bowled him over. The next instant Jack was hopping like a kangaroo toward the window, and thrusting the mortgage release into the outer pocket of his coat.

Donovan rushed at him, with knife uplifted. Jack kicked at him, knocking the knife from his hands; yet Donovan got Jack by one leg, and began to drag him backward, as Jack tried to lift himself by his hands to the window.

Jack struggled to draw himself up, with Donovan hanging to him; and he might have escaped even in this desperate way if he had only one man to deal with.

But Ross had been given time to get up. He now rushed upon Jack and, catching him about the shoulders, he drew him back, with Jack exerting every ounce of his strength and all his fighting skill to free himself from his clutch.

The two men doubled on Jack now and tried to hurl him to the floor. One of them slipped, and again Jack tried to reach the window; but the best he could do was to shake himself free and gain the protection of the nearest corner, where he stood at bay, panting heavily from his tremendous exertions. His feet were still tied.

The men confronted him, Donovan with the knife, and Ross with a revolver which he had hastily drawn.

On Donovan's mottled face was a look of fury.

"We was paid to kill you, kid, and now here's where we do it!" he shouted, gripping the knife in his big, brown hand.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HEROISM OF TWO GIRLS.

Kate Strawn and Nellie Conner had gained the cover of the thick shrubbery near the hut. Though the bushes were leafless, they yet afforded a screen behind which they had made their approach. They heard the commotion within.

Nellie stopped, trembling, her face white; and Kate seemed equally startled. She fancied she heard Jack's voice, and she heard plainly the voices of his enraged captors.

"Perhaps we can see in," said Kate, looking through the bushes. "The door is shut, but there is a window."

Her hand trembled as she took the fingers of Nellie Conner in her own; but she drew Nellie along with her, and the two frightened, yet courageous girls approached the hut.

"We was paid to kill you, kid, and now here's where we do it!" they heard Donovan shout.

Kate Strawn shook like a leaf as she dropped down beside the hut and tried to look through a crack she observed there in the wall.

Nellie fell upon her knees at Kate's side.

They still clasped hands.

Kate put her eye to the crevice, and the first thing she saw was Jack Lightfoot, propped up in that corner at bay, with the two men standing before him and threatening him with knife and revolver.

Something rose up in Kate Strawn's throat and her sight blurred when she saw that. For a moment her head swam giddily.

She conquered the feeling and looked again. She did not observe that Jack's feet were tied; she only saw his face, heroic as that of a young war-god. It was pale, and his eyes were very bright, but there was no quailing in either face or eyes.

Jack knew his peril full well, but he was heroic in spite of it, and was resolved to fight these men to the last gasp, if they rushed upon him. He did not dream that friends were anywhere near.

"It's Jack," Kate whispered. "They're going to kill him—those men are going to kill him!"

Her face was now as white as Nellie's.

Nellie's lips seemed speechless. She had not even looked, but she heard those angry voices.

"Can't we do something?" she contrived to stammer. "We must do something!"

Kate's quick mind was working rapidly. By nature an actress, her thoughts turned that way. She knew that she and Nellie could not fight successfully with those two armed men.

"Can you shout?" she asked. "Make your voice hoarse and big. Come!"

Still clutching Nellie's hand, she began to move softly round to the door.

"Stand back!" they both heard Jack yell at this juncture.

The enraged ruffians were apparently about to advance on him in his corner.

"Now!" said Kate, standing up, while her bosom heaved. "Make your voice heavy, if you can."

Then she bellowed, in a voice as hoarse as she could make it:

"They're in there, fellows; surround the house!"

She cracked a stick heavily under her feet, and reaching forth her hand hammered loudly on the door.

"Don't let 'em get away!" she shouted.

Then she whispered to Nellie:

"Run round the house, and make all the noise you can."

Nellie ran. She jumped and stamped her feet.

"That's right!" Kate yelled again. "Surround 'em; don't let 'em get away!"

There was silence within.

Kate moved along the wall, making a rustling noise with her feet.

Her face was flushed now and her dark eyes were big and bright. That strange lump was still in her throat, and she felt that she was choking; but her strong will conquered. She yelled again, at the corner of the building, and threw a stick far out from her, making it rustle through the shrubbery.

Then the front door flew open, and two wild-eyed men sprang out, with drawn revolvers.

They glanced about, but Kate and Nellie were both hidden by the corners of the house.

They did not stop to investigate. They believed they had been trapped in the hut, and they expected to hear bullets singing about their ears; and so they ran like deer, jumping with crackling noise into the undergrowth and sprinting for safety.

A moment later two wild-eyed girls put their heads through the door which the fleeing ruffians had left open, and there they came face to face with Jack

Lightfoot, who had hopped over to the opening, his feet still bound.

The sight of them astonished him.

"You here!" he said. "I hope the boys won't let those rascals get away."

Nellie seemed about to fall from sheer weakness, and Jack caught her; but Kate drew herself up resolutely.

"Let us in," she begged; "there are no boys out there, and no men. Let us in quick, please, before those men come back; we did that."

If Jack was astonished before, his amazement was too great almost for words when he heard this. The thing was nearly unbelievable.

"You alone—no one here?" he gasped.

"Close the door and bar it," said Kate.

Then, when Jack was doing this, she sank to the floor and began to laugh wildly.

It was the wild laugh of a girl driven almost into hysterics by intense excitement.

CHAPTER XII.

BACK FROM A WATERY GRAVE.

Jack Lightfoot was at home again.

The marvelous story of his rescue from the hut where he had been held by two men who had captured him was being told all over the town.

There was one thing that was not yet being told, however; Jack had not yet revealed what he had learned concerning Prof. Sanderson.

Jack had brought home the mortgage release, which the professor had declared had no existence, and he meant now to confront Sanderson with it. He was wondering what Sanderson would do, for it convicted him of lying and fraud. Yet, as the reader knows, that was not all Jack was now able to bring against his enemy.

Sanderson was at home, shivering with the fear that had come so suddenly upon him. Jack Lightfoot was not dead, and what Jack might have learned was enough to give him much troubled thought. While the whole town was ringing in praise of Nellie Conner and Kate Strawn, Sanderson could not find it in his heart to think highly of what they had done.

As Jack was talking with Daisy and his mother, recounting his startling experiences, while his mother and sister seemed unable to feast their eyes sufficiently on him, there came a knock at the front door.

Mrs. Lightfoot went to the door, with Jack and Daisy following her, Daisy having her arm linked lovingly through Jack's.

When the door was opened, a bronzed, weather-beaten man, a bit like a rugged sea-captain, was seen in the yard. He had just taken off his hat, as the door opened.

Mrs. Lightfoot reeled unsteadily on her feet, and then threw herself at him, crying out the name of her husband.

As Mrs. Lightfoot screamed and fell forward, apparently about to faint, Jack bounded out of the house, shouting at the top of his voice the joyful words:

"Father! Oh, it's father!"

The weather-beaten man was John Lightfoot, returned at last from the South Seas.

It would be indelicate to intrude on the first transports of that meeting. It was as if the very grave had given up its dead.

Later the whole town was to know that John Lightfoot's wild cruise into the South Pacific had not been fruitless, even though it had taken him so near to death.

Rich pearls, vast stores of them, had been found; and when hope itself seemed dead and the sight of those riches but a mockery, a storm-tossed vessel, driven far out of its course, had put in there for water, and had released the island prisoners.

Lightfoot had reached San Francisco in due course; and then, without first telegraphing of his coming, for he wanted to make the surprise complete, he had journeyed homeward as fast as trains could carry him.

And he was again at home—home!

"And rich, mother!" he said, speaking to his wife. "Rich beyond anything I ever expected to be. And that means a good deal for Jack and Daisy, eh?"

* * * * *

The surprise with which John Lightfoot learned of the mortgages which Prof. Sanderson professed to hold may be imagined.

His wrath arose, when he heard of what Sanderson had done and threatened.

"We'll face him in this!" he said to Jack. "Come with me!"

"He hired those men to kill me, I know," said Jack, as he and his father left the house together.

"The scoundrel! The infernal scoundrel!" panted John Lightfoot, roused to a great pitch of rage. "Does he think he can do such things in a civilized community and escape? The man must be crazy, or else I was to believe he could ever be anything but a rogue. The prison bird!"

Prof. Sanderson had packed the few belongings that he did not care to leave and was about to depart from

his house, when John Lightfoot arrived in front of it with Jack.

In spite of the intervening years and their changes, Sanderson recognized John Lightfoot at a glance, the recognition possibly being aided by Jack's presence there with his father.

When he beheld Jack and his father Sanderson drew back into the house. He was barring the door when John Lightfoot thundered on it with his knuckles, making the panels ring.

"Open the door, you villain; you shall not escape!" John Lightfoot shouted, hammering with his hard fist. The door did not open.

John Lightfoot drew back.

"He may try to get out the back way," Jack suggested, wrought to a great pitch of excitement.

They stepped into the yard, so that they could see toward the rear and through the leafless garden.

Still Sanderson did not appear.

"Go for the constable," said Lightfoot; "I'll watch here. I intend to have this man arrested and punished."

Jack darted away.

Kennedy came at Jack's call, palpitating with professional eagerness.

Still Sanderson had not shown himself.

Kennedy hammered on the door and rang the bell.

When the door did not open, he applied keys to the lock, and finding one that fitted he opened the door himself.

As he pushed back the door, in the wide hall they beheld a staring man, who looked more like a wild beast than a man, for though his face was the long, white countenance of Prof. Sanderson, the whole expression had changed.

Prof. Sanderson had become a victim of the mania that had gradually grown upon him through the years in which he had nourished his hate, and fed it in his heart. It had been a monomania, now it was insanity.

"Back!" he cried, screaming the word. "Back!"

He put out his long white hands to repel the intruders.

John Lightfoot stopped aghast, and so did Jack.

But Kennedy went forward. He, too, saw what had come to Sanderson, but as constable he must do his duty.

"Don't you know me, Sanderson?" he said.

Sanderson looked at him.

"Yes, I know you; you're Kennedy, and you've come to arrest me for the murder of Jack Lightfoot. But I—I didn't do it—I didn't do it!"

"Of course not," said Kennedy; "for Jack is here. Come forward, Jack."

Jack felt for Sanderson a sort of compassion as he obeyed Kennedy's summons. The discovery that Sanderson had lost his mind had come to Jack as a shock.

Prof. Sanderson had, however, reaped as he had sown.

Hate has sometimes a bitter harvest.

* * * * *

That night, in the shed-room at home where Jack had passed so many pleasant hours, some of his friends gathered, to congratulate him.

The reader can imagine readily enough what they talked about.

"I'm only afraid it will take you away from the Cranford high school!" said Lafe Lampton seriously. "That would be a calamity—for me."

Jack laughed.

"I hope to stay here, and in the high school until I go to old Harvard," he said.

"But, howling mackerels, it puts you in shape to have some fine old times now!" said Ned Skeen, almost enviously.

"I've thought of that, too," said Jack, laughing again.

"You know you've wanted to travel, and all that," said Skeen; "and you thought you'd like to go to Florida, and up into Canada, and do some hunting and fishing."

"I may get to do something of the kind," Jack answered. "But I haven't any definite plans yet, you know; it's all too sudden."

"Fellows," said Lafe, as he chewed contentedly at a red Baldwin apple, "we haven't done this thing up right yet."

"No?" questioned Tom Lightfoot.

"Of course we haven't."

"You tell us how."

Lafe raised himself from his chair, and taking off his cap swung it.

"This is it—now, everybody. Three cheers for Jack Lightfoot and his good fortune!"

And the cheers were given, not only with a will, but with a yell.

THE END.

As may be supposed, the good fortune that came to Jack Lightfoot opened an opportunity for him to do a little travel in search of sport before buckling down to school life in earnest, with fair Harvard as his goal. Some of the adventures that befel him, together with two of his stanch comrades, on a cruise during the middle of the winter, on a Southern water course, will be given next week under the title of "Jack Lightfoot Down in Dixie; or, The Cruise of a Single Hand Cruiser."

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training." No. 39, "The Men in the Line." No. 40, "The Men Behind." No. 41, "Signal Systems." No. 42, "Team Play." No. 43, "The End of the Season." No. 44, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus." (I.) No. 45, "A Gymnasium Without Apparatus" (II.)

BAG-PUNCHING.

Bag-punching is very fascinating, and probably appeals to more people than almost any other exercise. The reason is that it seems to be play instead of work. Who can resist the temptation to strike a punching-bag, no matter how dignified he may be, when he sees it within arm's reach? It is a magnet that draws both young and old. A large number of persons who perhaps would never take any exercise other than walking to and from school or business are known to be enthusiastic champions of the punching-bag. No one can deny that it is fun to let drive at a punching-bag when he has the chance. There are some courses of physical training which have not met with much favor because they seem to the average person to be more on the order of work, and require their serious attention constantly. But when you are punching the bag you feel that you are getting a whole lot of fun out of it, and do not stop to think of any particular benefit to be derived from the exercise.

It must be admitted that most of us prefer to strive for physical development, as well as other things, along those lines which offer the least resistance. It is much more interesting to indulge in an exercise that affords a whole lot of amusement at the same time than to spend half-an-hour or so in doing something which we only do because we think it would be beneficial to our health. But who ever stood off before a punching-bag and fought it to a standstill without having his blood tingle! The interest and excitement make the exercise recreation instead of labor.

The punching-bag is a comparatively recent invention. It made its appearance first in the training-quarters of pugilists less than half a century ago. Neither did it resemble the punching-bag of to-day, except in outline. The first used were large, ungainly things about the size of a man's body, and filled with bricks packed in straw and other materials, for the purpose of giving the bag perfect solidity. It never occurred to any one that it would be better to have the ball hollow. Of course these bags were used only for the purpose of developing the hitting muscles of professional fighters; and it was a long time before the punching-bag was modified to anything approaching the modern inflated leather sphere with its buoyant qualities almost like those of a toy balloon.

The benefit of this form of exercise should not be underestimated. There is nothing which surpasses it for developing the muscles of the chest and arms. It will also increase the lung-power more than any other simple exercise. For the man who wants to become a good boxer, bag-punching is the best thing to give him con-

trol of his hands, cultivate a quick eye, and easy movements of the body. A few months' practise will make you a hard hitter and afford the training necessary to plant your blows on a moving object.

Do not think that the instructions in this article are given to encourage you to become budding prize-fighters; the purpose is merely to instruct you in a few simple rules, so that you can enjoy a delightful exercise. Of course there are times when a knowledge of self-defense is a very good thing to have, and the practise you have had at the punching-bag might not come amiss. But reserve any skill you may gain by this exercise until those occasions when it seems absolutely necessary for you to bring it into play to defend yourself from an unprovoked attack.

All the apparatus that is required for a beginner can be bought for the small sum of a dollar and a half. A. G. Spalding & Co., of New York, sell a punching-bag which costs no more than this. They have them as high as ten dollars, but for a boy who is just beginning a cheap one will do to start with.

In learning to punch the bag properly, the best method is to strike it first with one hand and then with the other. This will make you a two-handed hitter; and that is what the novice should try to become. Remember that you can do a great deal more execution with both hands than with one only. To prevent the knuckles from getting sore, wear an old pair of gloves when practising. Put on a light, sleeveless jersey; do not try to exercise in your shirt and vest, for bag-punching is hard work, and in a few minutes you will be warm enough without having on any superfluous clothing.

Stand before the bag just the same as you would before an opponent. Place the left foot about eighteen inches in advance of the right. Hold the knees rigid. Have the body set in an easy position, and keep the shoulders drawn slightly back. The right hand should act as a guard, being about on a level with the waist-line and a little in advance of it. Extend the left forward on a level with the shoulder. Then place yourself within easy distance of the bag, not too near or too far; just so that you can reach it without being obliged to bend too far forward when you want to strike and will not have any difficulty in making a quick retreat when the bag rebounds. The following suggestions will enable you to conduct your practise with some degree of intelligence.

Begin with what is called the "left lead." Stand about three feet from the bag, seeing that it is hung a little above the level of the eyes. Step forward, at the same time striking out with the left hand. Aim for the center of the bag, and throw the weight of the body into the blow. In doing this, turn the head a little to the right side, keeping the right hand in position to ward off a counter-blow on the rebound. Be careful not to hit the bag a downward blow, as this only shortens your reach and destroys the full force of your striking powers. After making the delivery, spring back as quickly as possible and let drive at the bag again. Make sure that you hit the bag straight, for if you do not it will bound back at an angle and strike you in the face if you are not careful. You should be on the lookout to strike a straight blow before it has a chance to get to you. Whenever you miscalculate the distance and the angle of the blow, duck your head to dodge the bag on its return. This will

(Continued on page 30.)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I am a Montana boy who has to ride fifteen miles on horseback to the nearest post office every week to get an ALL-SPORTS. Although several papers and magazines come to us every month, there is a general squabble among the members of the family to see who will get your interesting weekly to read first. My father wondered at first why it was that we children were so anxious to get it before the others. One day he picked it up out of curiosity and started to read the first chapter. I noticed that he did not put it down till he had read it through to the end. I asked him if he thought it was a nice book and how he liked it. He told me that it was the best boys' paper he had ever seen, and wanted us to always let him have it after we had read it. My father says that if all the boys of America could have such clean, interesting stories placed in their hands, they would all grow up to be manly men. He also said that he wished that in his boyhood days he could have had such good reading matter.

RALPH DUNSTER.

Virginia City, Mont.

It seems that every member of your family appreciates the merits of the greatest boys' weekly published to-day. It is certainly worth the trouble of going fifteen miles to get it each week. You are not alone in this sentiment, for we are receiving letters each week from readers all over the country who express the same thoughts respecting a paper which has done so much to give them many a pleasant hour. Your father did a wise thing when he decided that the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY is a publication he intends to allow you to continue reading, for, as he says, its clean, manly stories will have a good influence upon your whole future conduct. We want no better recommendation of its merits than to know that he has requested you to always save each issue so that he can read it himself.

I am a boy twelve years old, and enjoy reading your wonderful ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. Until I got hold of a copy and read its pages, I never cared for outdoor sports. Now I want to be outside all the time, playing football or some other game which your paper tells us about each week. I never thought six months ago that anything could change a person so in regard to exercise and study. My mother says that I am getting crazy to let a thing take hold of me in such a way. I want to be like Jack Lightfoot if I can. He is such a noble young man, and has become the hero among all my friends. They say if they could be like him they feel they would be satisfied. He is the finest character I have ever read about.

WALTER GODWIN.

Watertown, N. Y.

By all means keep up your interest in outdoor sports, but do not let yourself be carried away to such an extent that you neglect the daily school lesson. Athletics are very necessary for everybody, particularly a growing boy, and should be practiced as much as possible for the great benefits to be derived from them, but it is not wise to neglect such an important thing as

study. The only time one has leisure to acquire knowledge for future work is the period of youth, and you should make the best of your opportunities now. You will find that you can play outdoor games without neglecting your studies if your time is divided properly. When we say this, do not think that we have lost sight of the fact that the change the ALL-SPORTS has made in your previous ways is a very good one. You have done a very wise thing in deciding to take an interest in the various sports which should occupy the attention of every boy; but remember to observe the happy medium in all things, whether it be sport, study, business or anything else. You can do nothing better than to make Jack Lightfoot a model for governing your future actions. If you take him as a criterion in the games you play you will not go astray, but, on the other hand, will find that you have a sure guide in everything pertaining to clean, manly sport.

Two months ago I and my brother first read the ALL-SPORTS. We liked it so much that we have bought it every week since. One day my older sister saw a copy in my room and started to read it. She said that she had never seen anything like it, and enjoyed the story very much. It seems so strange that a girl should be interested in a boy's story which deals with sports. I never thought that girls cared for anything but dolls and other things. We had to promise to give her the book after we had read it. The only way Jim and I read the library first is to toss up a penny. Sometimes he gets it first and other weeks I am the fortunate one to get first chance. I hate to wait for him to finish when it is his turn, and sometimes feel like grabbing the book out of his hand. Sister Jane says that Jack Lightfoot is the best hero she ever read about, and the way she is always talking about him makes us think that she is in love with him.

JOHN SAMUELS.

Redlands, Cal.

It does not seem so very strange to us that a girl should take such an interest in the stories of ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, for the universal love for all outdoor sports which has become so pronounced the last few years has met with just as much favor with our sisters as with ourselves. If Jane thinks so much of Jack Lightfoot there is a very good reason. She admires him because he possesses all those manly qualities which every girl likes so much to see in a young man. We note from your letter that we have three more loyal readers of the popular ALL-SPORTS. This is always a great source of satisfaction to us.

I can't say enough in favor of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. It is one of the finest published, and I hope nothing will ever happen to Jack Lightfoot and his friends, and that he will always be the winner in all the games he takes part in. I wish I could just be half as good a player as Jack. Of course I don't expect to ever become as good as he is, for he is such an expert. Long live the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY! It is the best ever put into a boy's hands. May it never cease to be read by all the boys in the whole United States.

WILLIE R. JACKSON.

Bloomington, Ill.

We thank you for your hearty praise, and hope that you will become just like Jack Lightfoot. You will if you make up your mind to do so. It is easier to imitate a noble character like him than to drift along without having any model of manliness and chivalry as a constant source of inspiration, which every young man should have. Accepting your best wishes for the success of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, we wait to hear from you again after you have read more about our hero.

We have read most of the numbers of the ALL-SPORTS, and wish to send our congratulations to the publishers. The library is a first-class paper for boys. I know it is, for it makes a hit with us, and we have read about all that was ever printed in this line. Several months ago we formed a club call the "All-Sports." Do you intend to issue any badges to the readers? I think it would be a good idea to do something like this, so that all the readers of the ALL-SPORTS would have some means of recognizing a fellow pard. Please let me and my friends know if you will do something of this kind in the future. We are anxious to know if we could get badges for our club. Wishing long life to the great ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, we all remain, five loyal readers,

B. HEFERR,
SMITH GARFIELD,
JACK KREUGERMANN,
BURMAN GLEASON,
ABE MYERHOFF.

St. Lotis.

A club organized as this one has been formed is a good thing for readers. It gives them an opportunity to meet and discuss the stories after each member has read them. By this means you will enjoy them twice, as it were. Your suggestion regarding the badges is a good one, and it may be acted upon in the future, but at present the matter cannot be considered, for there are other new features which we think our readers would prefer us to introduce first. However, we thank you for taking sufficient interest in the welfare of the weekly to suggest badges for club members.

Having been a reader of ALL-SPORTS from the first issue, I feel that I have a right to express my opinion of the stories and the characters. Jack is my idea of what an American boy should be. He can deliver the goods nearly every time. What I like best about him is the fact that he makes mistakes. Of course all boys do, and they can't be made to believe that a fellow can do everything better than any other boy and never trip up. We all like to see a fellow ambitious to lead, and if he's got the right sort of stuff in him most of us are satisfied to follow after him. Jack is a born leader. He shows it by his good generalship and in a dozen other ways. What he did to Wilson Crane in that story of the meeting at the "gym" was a-plenty. They'll have to get up pretty early in the morning to down Jack, I'm thinking. And then Lafe is just a dandy, with Tom not far behind. I also like Phil in spite of his faults. The girls add greatly to the interest of the yarns and we'd like to hear more about them. Kate is my choice, and she's "made good" on several occasions to prove that she's a brave girl. Please print this in your Chat department so my friends may see that there is no fake about it.

CHARLES L. ROONEY.

Elizabeth, N. J.

We have given your letter in full, for though it contains nothing particularly new, still you voice the sentiments of a host of readers. Write again, Charles. We hope you are sounding the praises of your favorite weekly among those boy friends of yours.

I have read sometimes of an instrument called a water-telescope, by means of which spongers down on the Florida Keys can see to the bottom of the ocean and discover the sponges they are in search of. Now I live on Great South Bay, Long Island, and there are times when in drifting over the water on a still day you can see the bottom easily, for it is very shallow, and I've often secured scallops and such things, as well as discovered new small beds of oysters. But should there be the slightest air stirring all the fun is stopped. It struck me that one of those water glasses might be of more or less use at such times. Can I buy one? Or are they easily made? Please answer in your Chat columns. I am a pleased reader of ALL-SPORTS.

R. SAMMIS.

Patchogue, L. I.

We do not know that you can buy such a thing—at least they are not advertised for sale. It is quite easy to make a water-telescope, however. Make a wooden box at least three feet long and with one end about ten inches square, while the other may if desired be smaller, say five inches square. Have the

inside painted black if desired. Now fit a pane of clear glass over the larger end, putty it well, and the seams of the box, to make the latter water-tight, and you have your water-telescope. Thrust the end containing the glass well beneath the surface of the water, apply both eyes to the other end, covering the head with a cloth if convenient, as photographers do, and the result will be a pleasure and a revelation to you in fairly shallow water.

"Wherein is the *Tip Top Weekly* better than ALL-SPORTS?" some reader asked. That's the question, and you'll have to show me. It's only because we've been reading the good old *Tip Top* so much longer and because the characters seem like old friends to us that some think it can't be beat. Maybe it can't be beat, but the ALL-SPORTS is running a neck-and-neck race with it. *Tip Top* and ALL-SPORTS forever! There's a certain athletic weekly that has more mysterious murders, black-mail adventures, kidnaping, etc., than athletics. The hero and heroine, acquainted about eight months, mind you, call each other "dear," "sweetheart" and such names. Maybe that would be in its place on special occasions—that is, with the parties concerned. I haven't called any names, but you all know to what I refer. I am glad to see that Brodie Strawn sees some good in Jack at last. Brodie always reminds me of the famous Bartley Hodge, of *Tip Top*, who always appeared as if he were chewing nails. I hope we may enjoy many years of ALL-SPORTS, and with three cheers for the same, I remain, "HANNIBAL."

I have been reading your ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY for some time, and I think they are fine and just the thing for boys who like to read wide-awake stories by a wide-awake author such as Mr. Stevens. He is certainly all O K, and I hope he will continue to write ALL-SPORTS. I would like to exchange souvenir post-cards with any of the readers and will return all favors promptly.

WILLIAM H. PREAS.

527 Otey Street, Bedford City, Va.

("How to do Things")—Continued from page 28.

cultivate the habit of moving quickly, one of the beneficial results for which bag-punching is so famous. After being taken unawares a couple of times and getting a sound slap in the face, you will probably do this instinctively and without any coaching.

The "right lead" is delivered in the same manner as the blow just described, only use the right hand, of course. You throw the weight of the body into the blow, at the same time ducking the head slightly to the left to avoid a counter from the bag. After making the punch, spring back into the first position. Hit the bag on the rebound as you did in practising the first lesson, and then alternate with both hands.

When these movements have been fairly mastered try the "right half-arm swing." To do this, step out with your left foot from the regular position, bend both knees and twist the body, making sure to throw your whole weight forward at the same time. This should all occur with one movement. Needless to say, it should be accomplished as quickly as possible. When the right hand has landed on the bag, move forward on a direct line with your left foot, placing the left hand up before your face to act as a guard.

A "left swing" is a very pretty blow when delivered neatly. The left arm should be kept well back and the body at a tension ready for a spring. Make a quick leap forward on the left foot, swing the body around and describe a half-circular motion with the left arm, making a pivot of the balls of both feet. Duck your head to the right at the same time the blow is being delivered.

These few exercises will be enough for the beginner to start with. The more difficult exercise on the punching-bag may appear in some future number.

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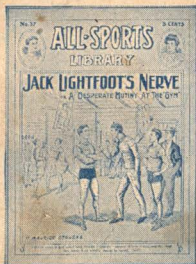
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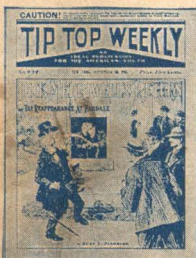
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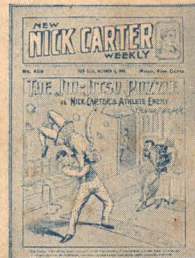
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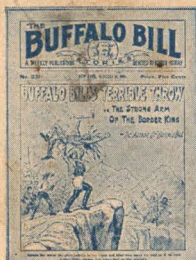
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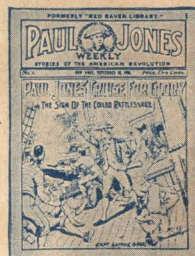
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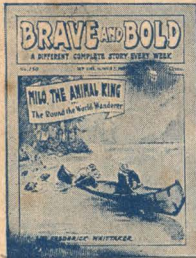
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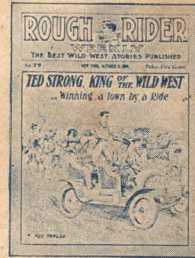
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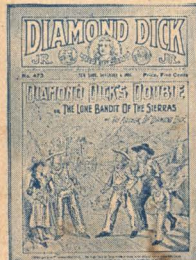
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